Supporting Student Success:
Resource Programming and Services

Student Services Series

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education

Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services

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Preface

Since the introduction in 1996 of the *Special Education Policy Manual*, the Department of Education has published a number of supplementary documents designed to elaborate upon various aspects of policy implementation. As a part of the Student Services Series, *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* is intended to provide direction to school boards on the role of resource teachers and their expected competencies and to assist them in the development of related policy and procedures. It is also intended to serve as a framework for professional development for resource teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators regarding the resource role within the context of the collaborative program planning process for students with special needs.

Context 1

It is critical that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of resource programming and services, whether it be for an individual student, a school, or a school board, reflect the philosophy, legislation, goals, policies, and best practices embodied in the *Education Act*, the learning outcomes framework of the *Public School Programs*, the *Special Education Policy Manual*, and supporting documents.

Education Act

The *Education Act* outlines the roles and primary responsibilities of school boards (Section 64), teachers (Section 26), and parents (Section 25) concerning the education of all students, including those with special needs (Appendix I). Based on the Act, provincial special education policy focuses on

- accommodation of diverse learning needs
- parental involvement in the program planning process
- collaborative individualized program planning
- an inclusive approach to the education of students with special needs

Public School Programs (PSP)

The goals of public education as defined in *Public School Programs* (PSP) are

> to help all students develop to their full potential cognitively, affectively, physically and socially; to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for them to continue as thinking, learning, physically active, valued members of society.[1]

1. *Public School Programs 1999–2000*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, A4.

The seven principles of learning upon which the public school program is based set a clear direction for teachers and administrators for the educational experiences they plan for their students and the manner in which they need to work with each other in support of student learning. These principles of learning as stated in the *PSP* are as follows: [2]

- Learning is a process of actively constructing knowledge.
- Students construct knowledge and make it meaningful in terms of their prior knowledge and experiences.
- Learning is enhanced when it takes place in a social and collaborative environment.
- Students need to continue to view learning as an integrated whole.
- Learners must see themselves as capable and successful.
- Learners have different ways of knowing and representing knowledge.
- Reflection is an integral part of learning.

The *PSP* document identifies six areas of learning known as essential graduation learnings through which public education goals can best be attained. These learning areas, which cross subject and specific curriculum boundaries, are

- aesthetic expression
- citizenship
- communication
- personal development
- problem solving
- technological competence

2. *Public School Programs 1999–2000*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, B3.

By developing a learning outcomes framework, at the centre of which are the essential graduation learnings, the Department of Education has clearly established a student-centred focus for the teaching/learning process. The emphasis is on learning outcomes for students. Outcomes are statements of what students are expected to know and be able to do at various points in their school career. While the essential graduation learnings outline what students are expected to know and be able to do in six broad learning areas by the time they graduate, the learning outcomes framework also identifies outcomes for core curriculum areas, which include

- **general curriculum outcomes**: what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in a curriculum area
- **key-stage outcomes**: what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 in a curriculum area
- **specific curriculum outcomes**: what students are expected to know and be able to do at a particular grade level in a curriculum area

The learning outcomes framework plays an important role in the program planning process for students with special needs. It provides the basis of consistent language and structure for program development. It serves as a reference point for program planning teams in determining student needs and in making decisions on programming adaptations within the PSP and/or individual program plans (IPPs).

Special Education Policy

Under special education policy, each school board is responsible for establishing a process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation for students with special needs. The program planning process (detailed in policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy Manual*), carried out by school-level program planning teams, provides a vehicle for building collaborative support networks designed to address a student's identified educational needs (Appendix II). Resource teachers and the programming and services they provide are critical components to the program planning process for students with special needs, and they can be a major component of the resulting support networks developed for individual students.

Programming and Services 2

Programming and services provided by resource teachers are intended to assist students in achieving the learning outcomes of the PSP curriculum or, in the case of students with an IPP, their individualized outcomes. Collaboration is critical to ensuring the essential relationship between support and outcomes. This is facilitated through the participation of both resource and classroom teachers in the program planning process as outlined in Policy 2.2 of the *Special Education Policy Manual*.

Overview of the Program Planning Process

Note

- The responsibility at the school level for ensuring that appropriate programs are provided for all students, including those with special needs, lies with the principal.
- Schools are expected to involve parents/guardians in a meaningful way throughout the program planning process.
- Program planning teams are expected to continue to gather information pertinent to programming for the individual student throughout the program planning process.

Stage 1—Identification

- Identification is the process that indicates whether additional planning is necessary to meet student learning needs.
- This may be initiated **at any time** by various parties (e.g., teachers, other professional board staff, parents/guardians, students, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA), or outside agencies that have parent/ guardian consent and involvement).

Stage 2—Exploration of Strategies in the Classroom

- This is a dynamic process that takes place at a classroom level and includes exploration, selection, implementation, evaluation of adaptations in one or more of the following areas: presentation, assessment/evaluation, motivation, environment, class organization, resources. Adaptations are documented in the cumulative record card. Additional information regarding adaptations is contained in Appendix III.

- The classroom teacher plays a central role in identifying and implementing strategies designed to meet students' needs, as well as in evaluating and recording the outcomes of utilizing these strategies.
- This exploration is collaborative in nature and draws upon the wealth of experience available in and to the school.

> **For many students, the identification, assessment, and program planning process may not go beyond this stage as their needs may be met through adaptations in the classroom.**
>
> **For students whose learning needs are not met, the process proceeds with a referral for a program planning team meeting.**

Stage 3—Referral for Program Planning Team Meeting

- A referral is made when further program planning is required to address the learning needs of the student.
- The referral format depends on school/regional procedures. Appendix IV provides examples of referral forms.
- The information gained in Stage 2 of the program planning process is critical in making an appropriate and complete referral.

Stage 4—Program Planning Team Meeting

> **Based on the student's strengths and needs in relation to learning outcomes, the program planning team decides whether to**
>
> - **develop adaptations beyond those implemented at Stage 2, while maintaining PSP outcomes**
>
> **and/or**
>
> - **develop an IPP**

- Program planning team members are those who have responsibility for the student's learning, including parent(s)/guardian(s); principal/vice principal; teachers, including resource teachers, and other professional staff involved; and if appropriate, the student. Additional members are added to the student's program planning team, depending on learning needs of the student and personnel resources of the school board and community (Appendix V).
- The program planning team ensures that the student's learning needs are clarified before proceeding with planning.

- The program planning team may decide that further adaptations are required:

Adaptations

There are no changes to PSP outcomes.

Teaching strategies are developed in one or more of the following areas:
- presentation
- assessment/evaluation
- motivation
- environment
- class organization
- resources

Adaptations are documented in cumulative record card.

The process then continues on to the Stages 6, 7, and 8.

- If the decision is that an IPP is required in one or more areas, the process proceeds to Stage 5. **Such a decision is based on the program planning team's determination that the outcomes of provincially approved curriculum must be changed to meet the needs of the student.**

Stage 5—IPP Development

- Depending on a student's needs, an IPP is developed in one or more areas.

IPP

An IPP may involve any or all of the following:
- deletion of curriculum outcomes
- adherence to the same general curriculum outcomes at a significantly different specific outcome level
- addition of new outcomes

The IPP is developed in accordance with Special Education Policy 2.6. (Appendix VI)

The process then continues on to the stages of implementation, monitoring, and review.

- Some students may require a combination of adaptations and an IPP. For example, a student may require adaptations in language arts and an IPP in math.

Adaptations	IPP
There are no changes to PSP outcomes. Teaching strategies are developed in one or more of the following areas: • presentation • assessment/evaluation • motivation • environment • class organization • resources	An IPP may involve any or all of the following: • deletion of curriculum outcomes • adherence to the same general curriculum outcomes at a significantly different specific outcome level • addition of new outcomes
Adaptations are documented in cumulative record card.	The IPP is developed in accordance with Special Education Policy 2.6.

Stage 6—Implementation of IPP and/or Adaptations

- Program planning team members assume responsibility for implementation of the IPP and/or adaptations.

Stage 7—Monitoring of IPP and/or Adaptations

- Ongoing monitoring of progress by program planning team members toward achievement of student learning outcomes is necessary.
- Minor changes that do not alter the student's learning outcomes, such as an adjustment to a strategy or inclusion of additional materials, may be made without a referral back to the program planning team. Such changes, however, should be recorded and shared as appropriate.
- If changes to a student's individualized outcomes are needed, there must be a referral back to the program planning team for review.

Stage 8—Review of IPP and/or Adaptations

- A review involves evaluating the student's progress towards meeting IPP outcomes and/or PSP outcomes (adaptations).
- If individualized outcomes have been achieved, new outcomes are developed to reflect the student's strengths and needs. This could include a return to PSP outcomes.
- If individualized outcomes have not been achieved, the IPP is revised to better reflect the student's strengths and needs. These revisions may be based on learning variables such as pacing and changing the incremental steps, instructional strategies, materials, and/or resources.

> **Student progress is evaluated in the context of learning outcomes.**
>
> **Ensuring that the learning outcomes are appropriate to the student's needs is a critical component of the review process.**
>
> **An IPP should be reviewed at least twice in each year.**

The Role of the Resource Teacher in the Program Planning Process

Overview

Inherent within the program planning process is the need for consistent involvement of the school community in a collaborative approach. Within this context there is a core role for the resource teacher. This includes

- sharing knowledge and expertise regarding special needs
- assisting in research, selection, and/or development of materials and resources appropriate to the needs of the individual learner
- contributing to the assessment of the student by helping to ascertain how the student learns
- sharing pertinent information regarding the individual learner
- assisting in the selection and adaptation of instructional strategies to meet student needs
- collaborating with classroom teachers and parents/guardians to assist with referral information
- contributing to the development, the implementation, and the evaluation of programming for students with special needs

- collaborating with other team members in the development and implementation of IPPs
- providing direct service to students in class and/or in a resource setting
- consulting and collaborating with other professionals
- participating in the overall review of IPPs and student progress in achieving individualized outcomes
- participating in the ongoing communication process with parents of students with special needs
- assisting in the transition process (community to school, grade to grade, school to school, and school to community) for students with special needs (Appendix VII, Policy 2.7).

Further Elaboration: The Program Planning Process and Role of the Resource Teacher

The following sections provide a closer examination of some of the areas in the program planning process. The focus is on the role of the resource teacher and the importance of collaboration, particularly with classroom/subject teachers, whether the process involves adaptations developed at the classroom level or programming developed as a result of program planning team meetings.

Assessment

The Department of Education defines assessment as the systematic process of gathering information on student learning. Assessment data inform the instructional process and contribute to programming decisions. Evaluation is the process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.

Whether informal or formal, assessment is viewed as an integral component of the teaching-learning process. As such, it informs teachers, students, and parents on an ongoing basis of the learning that has taken place while providing some insights as to the effectiveness of instructional strategies, programming interventions and support, and the assessment practices themselves. To help ensure the efficacy of assessment results, it is essential that assessments are relevant and current; are free of bias due to gender, language, culture, or race; and profile both student strengths and needs. A copy of the *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* is included in Appendix VIII. It is also important in the case of formal individual assessments of academic achievement that resource teachers understand and possess the required competencies for administering, interpreting, and reporting of any assessment instruments they are using.

Classroom/subject teachers play an important role in the assessment of all students. Teachers are able to provide valuable information on student learning gathered through the use of a variety of assessment techniques and strategies such as

- anecdotal records
- checklists
- conferences and interviews
- miscue analysis and running records
- observation
- performance assessment
- questioning
- questionnaires, inventories, and surveys
- rating scales and analytic scales
- self-assessment
- student folders and portfolios
- tests

For further information on the above techniques and strategies, see Appendix IX.

Role of the Resource Teacher in Assessment

In addition to being able to assist classroom/subject teachers with the gathering of informal assessment information, it is expected that resource teachers have expertise in the areas indicated in Section 4 of this document, namely,

- assessment approaches that match the specific strengths and needs of individual learners
- administration, interpretation, and reporting on assessments of academic achievement
- application of qualitative and quantitative assessment information to programming decisions
- evaluation of the ongoing effects of instructional strategies, adaptations, and supports
- reporting of student information to a variety of audiences regarding assessment, achievement, and programming

The assessment information gathered by classroom/subject teachers and resource teachers may be supplemented by additional information from a number of other sources, including but not limited to parents/guardians, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, and medical personnel. Consideration of the following questions may assist with the analysis of all of the available assessment information in preparation for collaborative decision making about programming and/or support services.

- What does the student know and understand in relation to the learning outcomes?
- What is the student able to do in relation to the learning outcomes?
- Under what circumstances is the student able to demonstrate what he or she knows, understands, and/or is able to do?
- Are there circumstances that hinder or decrease the student's ability to demonstrate what he or she knows and/or is able to do?
- How does the student approach a task, assignment, test, etc.?
- What can be learned about the student's learning style from the approach(es) used in doing a task, assignment, test, etc.?
- Is there critical assessment information that has not been obtained? If so, what further assessment is required and who should carry it out?
- Given the assessment information and the analysis of it, what are the implications for programming and/or support services for the student?

Program Development

Throughout the development of programming, the principle of "only as special as necessary" should guide the decisions regarding the level of intervention and the recommended services for the student. This principle is outlined in detail in Appendix X.

In developing programming for students with identified learning needs, the first decision that must be made is whether a student requires adaptations in order to be able to achieve within the prescribed learning outcomes or if the student requires a change in outcomes and the development of an IPP.

In some instances, it is evident that adaptations are sufficient to meet the student's learning needs. The classroom/subject teacher, frequently in collaboration with the resource teacher, identifies strategies to support the student within the learning outcomes. For students requiring adaptations, referral to a program planning team is made only when, despite the implementation of these strategies, the student's learning needs are not met. The areas in which planned interventions may occur in support of a student remaining within the learning outcomes are identified in Figure 1. Examples of specific strategies within each of the six areas are found in Appendix III.

For a student whose needs necessitate changing learning outcomes, an IPP is developed by the student's program planning team (Appendix VI, and Appendix V).

Figure 1: Adaptations (No changes to provincially approved curriculum outcomes):*

*Adapted, with permission, from *Teacher's Guide to Pre-referral Intervention*, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, Division of Student Support Services, 1996.

Role of the Resource Teacher in Program Development

The contribution of the resource teacher to the development of programming for students with special needs is based upon a knowledge of learning outcomes and curriculum across grades, subjects, and courses. It is also expected that resource teachers have skills and expertise in

- making specific connections between assessment information and program development
- applying current and credible educational research and practice, as it pertains to the characteristics of learners, to programming for individual students
- identifying incremental learning steps and applying them to program development
- matching instructional, assessment, and evaluation strategies with the strengths and needs of the individual student

Program Implementation and Evaluation

As part of the program planning process, team members are assigned responsibilities for implementation. In the case of adaptations, it is important to consider in which curriculum areas the adaptations will be required and how they may need to be adjusted across curriculum areas. In the case of an IPP, the program planning team may find it helpful to use a matrix to assist with planning implementation (Appendix XI).

Role of the Resource Teacher in Implementation of Programming

The role of the resource teacher in the implementation of programming is determined within the collaborative program planning process. In defining the involvement of the resource teacher, the following questions should be considered:

- How will the intervention by the resource teacher contribute to student achievement of learning outcomes?
- Will there be direct service, indirect service, or a combination of both?
- If direct service is to be provided, what will be the nature of the intervention (e.g., building and applying identified skills, learning strategies, compensatory strategies)?
- If direct service is to be provided, will it take place in the classroom, the resource setting, or a combination of both settings?

- What role will the resource teacher play in the student's transitions (home to school, grade to grade, school to school, school to community or further education)?
- How and when will the joint planning between the classroom/subject teacher and the resource teacher take place?

> **It is important that direct service provided to students by a resource teacher is focussed on supporting the achievement of learning outcomes. It is therefore essential that joint planning and ongoing collaboration between the resource teacher and classroom/subject teacher take place whether resource services occur in the classroom, the resource setting, or in both settings.**

Role of the Resource Teacher in Evaluation and Reporting of Learning Outcomes

Evaluation of learning outcomes is the process of analysing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered. For students receiving resource services, the evaluation of the programming developed to meet their needs and their progress in achieving learning outcomes is a collaborative process involving all of those responsible for the student's programming. Closely associated with the evaluation process is the reporting of this information to parents/guardians. As in all other stages of the programming process, reporting should focus on the achievement of learning outcomes. The evaluation must be collaborative to ensure clear communication of student progress.

Service Delivery 3

Effective support for students in achieving learning outcomes is at the core of good decisions regarding how and where resource programming and services are provided. The decision process should include consideration of the following:

- the specific needs and strengths of students
- the extent to which appropriate inclusion is supported by service delivery decisions
- the flexibility required to address the changing needs of students
- the efficiency of the delivery of resource programming and services
- the accessibility to resource programming and services

Providing Support through Co-Teaching

The *Special Education Policy Manual* states ...

> The goal of inclusive schooling is to facilitate the membership, participation and learning of all students in school programs and activities. The support services that are designed to meet students' diverse educational needs should be coordinated within the neighbourhood school and to the extent possible, within grade level/subject area classrooms. (p. 13)

Co-teaching is a model for the delivery of resource services that supports this goal for students. For the purpose of this document, co-teaching is defined as **a classroom/subject area teacher and a resource teacher working together in the same setting to provide instruction to students using one or more of a variety of co-teaching formats**.

The co-teaching model offers a number of potential benefits for both students and teachers.

Benefits to students include

- a greater inclusion of students in classroom learning experiences
- immediate intervention directly linked to classroom learning experiences
- simultaneous access to the instructional strategies of two teachers
- improved student-to-teacher ratio
- increased opportunities for students to learn from each other and to observe how others learn

Benefits to teachers include

- opportunities to learn from each other and to share expertise
- ongoing face-to-face communication between classroom/subject teacher and resource teacher
- shared materials and resources
- shared responsibility for direct support for students in the classroom
- improved student-to-teacher ratio

Successful co-teaching is based on implementation of the following principles:

- an acceptance of shared responsibility for students
- a common focus on providing students with meaningful learning experiences and on teaching students how to learn
- a commitment to ongoing communication regarding programming for students
- an understanding of and respect for each other's perspective and expertise
- a recognition of the importance of joint planning to the success of co-teaching

Ongoing consideration of the following questions may assist resource and classroom/subject teachers in planning for co-teaching:

- How will joint planning time be achieved?
- What outcomes are to be addressed and what content will be used to address them?
- Which students are likely to require support and/or follow-up?
- Which co-teaching format(s) will be used?
- Which instructional strategies will be used?
- What materials and/or resources are required?
- How will learning be assessed and reported?
- What are the specific roles and responsibilities of each teacher?

Co-teaching, characterized by collaborative and collegial partnerships, provides enhanced learning opportunities for students in the classroom setting, in particular for students with special needs.

Examples of Co-Teaching Formats

This format can be used at any point of instruction within a curriculum unit.

No. of Student Groups	Teachers' Roles	Format Description
one	• one teacher leading the lesson • one teacher providing mini lessons as student needs require	• One teacher teaches the planned lesson. • One teacher observes to identify students who require immediate instructional intervention and provides clarification and/or a mini lesson that will enable the student(s) to quickly become re-engaged in the lesson. • Students who require follow-up are noted.

This format works well when key concepts of a curriculum unit have already been introduced.

No. of Student Groups	Teachers' Roles	Format Description
two	• both teachers teaching the same content	• The class is divided into two heterogeneous groups for the teaching of the lesson, allowing incorporation of more interaction and support. • To draw a conclusion to the lesson, the students are brought together as one group for a review and summary of key concepts.

This format is useful when the need for consolidation of learning is identified. It also provides an opportunity for extending learning outcomes.

No. of Student Groups	Teachers' Roles	Format Description
two	• one teacher re-teaching • one teacher teaching additional information related to the topic/ concept (i.e., extending outcomes)	• Students are assigned to one of two groups based on their knowledge and skills and the progress made regarding the curriculum unit and/or concept. • These topic specific groupings are intended to be both temporary and flexible.

This format can be used with heterogeneous groups when concepts for a curriculum unit have been taught and students are engaged in activities designed to reinforce learning and application. It also lends itself to temporary grouping to allow for intervention to meet specific needs.

No. of Student Groups	Teachers' Roles	Format Description
multiple	• both teachers monitoring student learning and providing instructional intervention as necessary	• Topic-related activities, designed to meet the diverse strengths and needs of the students, are set up at stations around the classroom. • Both teachers circulate to monitor student progress and provide instructional intervention as required. Alternatively, one teacher may work with one group in order to address identified specific needs while the other teacher works with the remaining groups.

This format can be used at any point of instruction within a curriculum unit. It assumes that both teachers have previous experience both in co-teaching and in working collaboratively with each other.

No. of Student Groups	Teachers' Roles	Format Description
one	• both teachers sharing teaching of same content	• Both teachers share the responsibility for instruction throughout the lesson. • Each teacher assumes the responsibility for leading the instruction for specific segments of the lesson. • Both teachers work together throughout this dynamic process to support and clarify each other's efforts through the provision of extensions, examples, and specific strategies for students.

Providing Support in a Resource Setting

At certain times and under certain circumstances, resource services for a student are provided in a resource setting. In making this decision, the following considerations should be taken into account:

- implementation of the principle of providing support that is only as special as necessary (Appendix X)
- the specific purpose for providing the service outside the classroom
- consistency of the intervention with the achievement of learning outcomes
- generalization of the skills and strategies addressed in the resource centre to the classroom
- the intensity of the service required
- the projected duration of the "out of class" intervention
- the way in which collaboration and joint planning between the classroom/subject teacher and the resource teacher will occur
- the extent to which the intervention supports inclusion of the student
- assurance that time out of the classroom will not result in penalizing the student
- provisions for regular and ongoing diagnostic record keeping

Resource Teacher Competencies

4

All teachers, including resource teachers, are expected to have and to apply core competencies within an inclusive approach to education. This approach is characterized by supportive learning environments, designed to address the diverse strengths and needs of students, in which all teachers demonstrate the following in their daily teaching:

- an understanding of the characteristics of learners
- the use of a variety of instructional strategies
- the use of a variety of assessment, evaluation, and reporting strategies
- an understanding of a learning outcomes framework
- a thorough knowledge of learning outcomes for the curriculum taught
- an understanding of educational implications that may be associated with the culture, language, gender, religious beliefs, and/or sexual orientation of students
- implementation of a student-centred approach to learning
- collaborative planning, implementation, and evaluation of programming

Although the following competencies also apply to all teachers, the broadened and evolving role of the resource teacher calls for additional skills in the following areas:

Knowledge and Application of Special Education Policy and Related Documents

- *Special Education Policy Manual* with emphasis on
  - 2.2 Process of Identification, Assessment, Program Planning and Evaluation for Students with Special Needs (Appendix II)
  - 2.3 Program Planning Teams Responsible for Programming and Monitoring (Appendix V)
  - 2.6 Individual Program Plans (Appendix VI)
  - 2.7 Transition Planning (Appendix VII)
- school board policies, guidelines, and procedures
- roles, rights, and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and schools
- relationship between special education policy and the PSP

Knowledge and Understanding of the Characteristics of Learners

- educational implications of various cognitive, sensory, physical, social, and emotional factors that affect students
- educational research as it pertains to the characteristics of learners
- developmental nature of learners

Skills and Strategies in Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

- assessment approaches that are consistent with the information being sought and that match the specific strengths and needs of individual learners
- administration, interpretation, and reporting on assessments of academic achievement
- application of qualitative assessment and quantitative assessment information to programming decisions
- evaluation of the ongoing effects of instructional strategies, adaptations, and supports
- reporting of student information to a variety of audiences regarding assessment, achievement, and programming

Knowledge and Application of Instructional Content and Practice

- instructional strategies matched to the specific strengths and needs of individual students
- general knowledge of curriculum across grades, subjects, and courses
- ability to identify incremental steps in program design
- ability to provide appropriate intensive intervention in the areas of literacy and numeracy
- ability to participate in the development and implementation of adaptations and IPPs
- ability to assist in selection, adaptation, use, evaluation, and revision of instructional strategies and supports
- ability to assist in the selection, adaptation, integration, and evaluation of assistive technology (Appendix XII)

Skill in Communicating and Working in Collaborative Partnerships

- collaborative practices in working with students, parents, school personnel, and community personnel
- collaborative practices in working with community agencies and government departments, especially in the areas of health, justice, and community services

Appendix I

Selected Excerpts, Sections 64, 26, 25, *Education Act*

The following excerpts from the *Education Act*, 1995–1996, outline the responsibilities of school boards, teachers, and parents/guardians regarding the education of students with special needs.

Section 64 General Responsibilities and Powers of School Boards

64(2) A School Board shall, in accordance with this Act and the regulations,

(a) make provisions for the education and instruction of all students enrolled in its schools and programs;

(d) develop and implement educational programs for students with special needs within regular instructional settings with their peers in age, in accordance with the regulations and the Minister's policies and guidelines

Section 26 Teachers

26(1) It is the duty of a teacher in a public school to:

(c) implement teaching strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes;

(f) acknowledge and, to the extent reasonable, accommodate differences in learning styles;

(g) participate in individual program planning and implement individual program plans, as required for students with special needs

Section 25 Parents

25(2) Parents of students with special needs shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of an individualized program for their children.

25(3) Where

(a) the parent of a child with special needs does not agree with the individualized program plan that has been developed for that child;

and

(b) the disagreement cannot be resolved by a school board appeal process,

the parent or the school board may initiate an appeal as prescribed by the regulations.

Appendix II

Policy 2.2, *Special Education Policy Manual*
(The Program Planning Process)

Policy 2.2

Each school board is responsible for establishing a process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation for students with special needs.

2.2 Guidelines

The school board is responsible for the implementation of this process; therefore, each procedural step should be documented in the school board's special education policy manual. School boards are encouraged to refer to the appropriate sections of the Department of Education and Culture's *Special Education Policy Manual*.

2.2 Sample Procedure

On the following pages is a sample outline, in graphic and written form, of how a program planning process might be implemented. It is not intended as a prescribed approach, but rather as an illustration.

Identification, Assessment and Program Planning Process

Stage 1 – Screening and Identification

This stage may be initiated by a variety of people. Some children and students may come to school with a myriad of assessments and programming information from other agencies or from another school. Some students may have been in school for a number of years and their special needs may be identified at a later stage by the classroom teacher who regularly observes students in the learning situation. The planning process can be initiated at any time based on student need.

If a student has been identified as needing an individual program plan before entry to school, the team may wish to start the process at step 3, "Referral to Program Planning Team," to avoid delay.

Parents are expected to be involved at the beginning of the process. Classroom teachers, parents, students and outside agency personnel and resource teachers are all possible initiators at this stage. The principal should be aware of any communication concerning students at this stage.

Stage 2 – Exploration of Instructional Strategies

After a student has been identified as requiring additional planning to meet his/her needs, the classroom teacher uses available material and human resources to explore a variety of strategies in the learning process. In all schools there is a wealth of experience to draw upon. In exploring alternative methods of working with students, teachers may also wish to consult supervisors, school psychologists or other available personnel. The key at this stage is to be as creative as possible in determining a wide variety of behavioural and/or curriculum strategies to meet student needs while ensuring accurate record keeping in terms of the outcome of utilizing these approaches. Determining why a method doesn't produce the desired outcome can yield as much information as one that does. Co-operation and collaboration among professionals and parents are essential at this stage.

The identification, assessment and program planning process may not go beyond this stage for many students as their needs may be met through ongoing evaluation and monitoring in the classroom. (Policy 2.4)

Stage 3 – Referral to Program Planning Team

If the classroom teacher requires further support to meet the needs of a student, he/she may wish to refer to the program planning team.

The format of the referral depends on school and district/regional procedures. In some cases the initiator of the referral may be required to have certain types of information available for the principal in order to make an informed decision whether or not to select team members and set a date for the program planning team meeting. Information required may include anecdotal information, observation records, informal assessment, interviews with the student and involved agencies, school records or any other information available that may be of help in program planning. Care should be taken not to use outdated or irrelevant assessment data.

Stage 4 – Program Planning Team Meeting

The program planning team must ensure that the problem or difficulty facing the student and/or teachers and parents is clarified before proceeding with planning. The reason for referral does not always match the team's clarification of the problem and careful problem solving at this stage can prevent unnecessary or inappropriate steps being taken.

Team members should be those who have responsibility for the student's learning. The team should always include the principal or vice-principal, teachers involved and parents/guardians. (See policy 2.4) These members form the core of the team. The selection of additional members depends on the needs of the student and on the personnel resources of the school district and community. In cases where there are many teachers involved, as in high school, reports can be gathered from teachers for presentation at the team meeting; however, key personnel should be present. In some cases this may include the student, especially at a high school level when career/transitional decisions are being discussed. Every attempt should be made to encourage parents to feel comfortable in presenting their views of the student's strengths and needs.

The team meeting provides an opportunity for members to come together to clarify, given all available information, the student's strengths and needs and to decide on future actions to be taken in terms of program planning. **The meeting should not be a forum for teachers, administrators, and other agency personnel to present a completed program to the parents.** If this is done, the parents become outsiders to the process and do not have the opportunity to affect decision making in any meaningful way. Together, the members should discuss the information each has observed and collected. Concerns should be expressed openly and information presented, without judgmental rebuttal. However, in cases where differences of opinion occur, the chairperson would act as mediator in the process.

The team decides whether or not to proceed with development of an individualized program plan (IPP). The meeting may highlight the need for a change in instructional strategies or evaluation methods while maintaining the objectives of a prescribed course. When this occurs, a statement outlining adaptation of strategies, evaluation methods and support services required should be recorded in the student's cumulative file. However, when the objectives of provincially approved curriculum must be changed to meet the needs of the student, an IPP becomes necessary. An IPP may focus on behavioral as well as curriculum outcomes to address student behaviours which may inhibit learning. At this point, the chairperson designates responsibility areas to the team members to develop the individualized program plan according to the priorities, goals and approaches set at the meeting, or to collect further information if necessary.

Stage 5 – Program Plan Developed

The program planning team uses information gathered to write the program plan. Those that have responsibility for implementation of parts of the plan should be involved in developing the objectives, deciding on strategies and evaluation procedures. The individual program plan should include the following components (Policy 2.6):

- a summary of student strengths and needs
  - annual individualized outcomes (goals)
  - specific individualized outcomes (objectives)
  - recommended services
  - responsibility areas
  - review dates
  - signatures

Stage 6 – Implementation of Program Plan

Team members are assigned responsibility areas and monitor student progress. The teacher responsible for teaching the student is also responsible for evaluating the student's progress in that curriculum area (Policies 2.5 and 2.6).

Stage 7 – Monitoring

Teachers and designated team members are required to evaluate individual program plans in order to assess student progress continually.

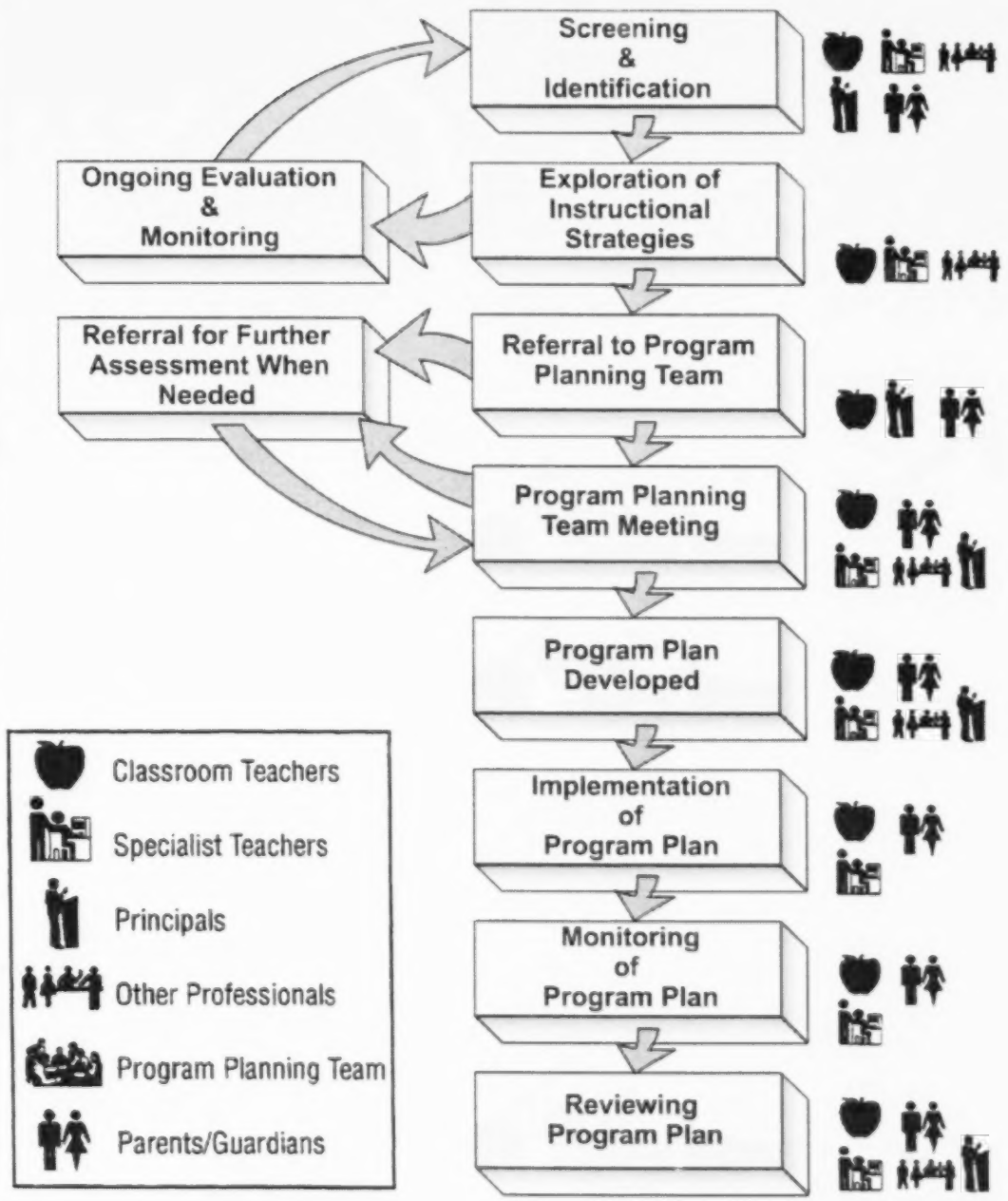
Stage 8 – Review of Program Plan

The program planning team is responsible for reviewing the student's progress in the plan and meeting to discuss changes when necessary. The program plan should be reviewed at least twice annually.

2.2 **Education Act:** Sections 25, 26, 38
Other References: Policy 2.4, 2.7
Public School Programs 1.9.3, Department of Education and Culture, 1993-95.

Identification, Assessment & Program

Planning Process



Appendix III
Adaptations

ADAPTATIONS

(NO CHANGES TO PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM CURRICULUM OUTCOMES)

Adapted with permission from Programming for Individual Needs: Prereferral Intervention Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, Department of Education, Division of Student Support Services, 1996.

Figure 1: Adaptations (No changes to provincially approved curriculum outcomes):*

*Adapted, with permission, from *Teacher's Guide to Pre-referral Intervention*, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, Division of Student Support Services, 1996.

Class Organization Strategies

Implementing class organization strategies involves more than consideration of the physical arrangement of classroom space although that is one aspect of it. It also includes the ways in which students work with each other and with teachers in order to achieve their outcomes.

Classroom Organization Strategies

The following are examples of classroom organization strategies that can assist in meeting a broad range of student learning needs:

- ❒ **co-operative learning groups**
- ❒ **classroom learning centres or stations**
- ❒ **interdisciplinary units**
- ❒ **independent study units**
- ❒ **buddy systems**
- ❒ **learning contracts**
- ❒ **circle of friends**
- ❒ **mentoring**
- ❒ **peer or cross-age tutoring**
- ❒ **flexible grouping: group size, group composition**
- ❒ **self-correcting tasks**

Classroom Organization Strategies (continued)

❒ **various leadership styles:**

- — teacher led
- — student led
- — co-operative

❒ **various levels of student independence**

- — discovery learning
  e.g., guided discovery; unstructured discovery
- — use of task cards for directions
- — teacher directions and guidance
- — student interdependence
  e.g., co-operative learning; peer support
- — independent activities
  e.g., learning centre activities; learning packets; independent study; contracts

To consider ...

- vary the organization strategy to meet the class/group/individual need at the time; flexibility is key

- collaborate with other classroom/subject teachers and resource teacher to plan effective class organization strategies to meet specific needs

Resources

Resource-based learning focusses on the abundance of learning opportunities that exist beyond a course textbook. Some students have difficulties with reading and/or writing that require programming to address these needs; however, **this should not prevent them from accessing the curriculum**. Print, particularly the textbook, is not the only source of information. There are other resources, which are available in most schools and/or communities, that appeal to a wide variety of learning needs.

In addition to material resources, consideration should also be given to the human resources available to provide support for students with moderate learning needs. When determining such supports, the principle of "only as special as necessary" should be used.

Resources

The following are examples of resources, both material and human, that can assist in addressing a range of learning needs:

In school:

- ❒ **audio sources**
  e.g., tapes; headsets; listening centres; talking books; taped textbooks; buddy readers for textbook work

- ❒ **visual sources**
  e.g., videotapes; photography; compact laser disk; overhead projector; computer simulations

- ❒ **other technology**
  e.g., computer software; adapted keyboards; word processing; calculators; spell-checkers; grammar checkers; voice synthesizers

- ❒ **various print formats**
  e.g., commercial books; magazines; newspapers; student- or teacher-made books and magazines; reference materials; enlarged print; braille; talking books; buddy system for copying notes using NCR paper

- ❒ **games**
  e.g., commercial with or without adaptations; teacher made; student created

- ❒ **commercial manipulatives**
  e.g., cooking equipment; base 10 blocks; globes; prepared geological collections; finger-paint; algebra tiles; musical instruments; circuitry sets; tactile maps; models

- ❒ **additional programming support**
  e.g., resource time; speech/language support

Resources (continued)

❒ **collected or teacher/student-made manipulatives**
e.g., geometric shapes made from empty boxes; homemade rhythm instruments; student-or teacher-made math manipulatives; papier mâché relief maps; coin collections

❒ **environmental resources**
e.g., rock collections; plants; building architecture; sounds in nature

In the community:

❒ **field trips to various sites**

❒ **guest speakers**

❒ **resource people to interview**

❒ **mentors**

❒ **other agencies involved in services for children and adolescents**

❒ **post-secondary sites and resource people**

To consider ...

- the age appropriateness of the resource
- the sequence of specific resources
- collaboration with library staff and teachers in the same or other grade levels/subjects to assist with resource selection and adaptation
- involvement of parents as resource people, mentors, guest speakers, etc.

Presentation Strategies

Differentiation within presentation strategies involves decisions regarding how new knowledge, skills, understandings, and/or desired behaviours are communicated to students. A teacher's knowledge of students' strengths, needs, interests, abilities and learning styles contributes significantly in choosing appropriate strategies.

Presentation Strategies and Student Activities

The following strategies may assist in addressing a broad range of student learning needs:

- ❒ **various teacher presentation modes:**
  - — oral
    (e.g., listening, discussion, listening to tapes or taped directions)
  - — written
    (e.g., commercial or student/teacher made books, journals, graphic organizers)
  - — visual
    (e.g., charts, pictures, diagrams, visual cues on written text, videotapes, graphic organizers)
  - — tactile
    (e.g., commercial manipulatives, student/teacher-made manipulatives or collected materials, equipment, models)
  - — action
    (e.g., demonstrating, dramatizing, modelling, simulations)

- ❒ **use of Gardner's "entry points"**

- ❒ **options for students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do in a variety of ways**
  - — oral
    (e.g., telling, discussion, putting answers on tape, dictating to a scribe)
  - — written
    (e.g., graphic organizer, sentence, outline, paragraph, essay)
  - — visual
    (e.g., drawing, creating a poster, exhibits, mural, graphic organizer)
  - — action
    (e.g., making, creating, performing, constructing, experimenting)

- ❒ **adjusting the oral and written vocabulary used; teaching specific vocabulary needed**

Presentation Strategies and Student Activities (continued)

- ❒ **changing task demands for the learner**
  e.g., reducing the reading level of the resource
- ❒ **modulating voice**
- ❒ **adjusting pace**
- ❒ **giving directions in several smaller steps rather than as a whole**
- ❒ **providing more response time**
- ❒ **using some of a student's resource time to "work ahead"**
  i.e., prepare for an upcoming unit
- ❒ **condensing or rewriting text material; using a student's dictated summary as a revised text**
- ❒ **using advance organizers, preview questions, outlines**
- ❒ **using KWL**
- ❒ **reworking the design and layout of assignment sheets/tests**
  e.g., limiting the number of concepts, items per page; providing vertical lines or graph paper for mathematical computation worksheets; providing subheadings
- ❒ **using "tiered activities"**
- ❒ **using study guides, review sheets**

Presentation Strategies and Student Activities (continued)

- ❒ **providing the student with a scribe, a peer note-taker (using carbon or NCR paper), or photocopying your (or a peer's) notes**

- ❒ **using mnemonic devices**
  e.g., visualization; silly sentences; acronyms

- ❒ **teaching study skills in context**

- ❒ **varying the mode of interaction**
  e.g., brainstorming; debating; discussing; questioning; role playing

- ❒ **differentiating homework assignments**

- ❒ **differentiating seatwork**

- ❒ **using window cards, frames, thick borders, or boxes to help students focus on the page or one aspect of it**

- ❒ **varying the balance between development and practice**
  e.g., more development/less practice may be what is needed

- ❒ **varying the kind and amount of practice, reinforcement**

- ❒ **varying the timing of practice**
  e.g., short and frequent sessions; longer, intermittent sessions

- ❒ **highlighting important material**

- ❒ **matching task demands to students' prior experiences**

Presentation Strategies and Student Activities (continued)

- ❒ **recognizing that outcomes may have different entry and exit points**
- ❒ **sequencing learning tasks with respect to the desired end point**
- ❒ **trying it a different way rather than repeating the same way over and over**
- ❒ **organizing the learning experiences around a theme or topic**

To consider …

- attach comparable value to different routes to the same end point
- collaborate with other classroom/subject teachers and resource teacher to plan effective presentation methods to meet specific needs

Assessment/Evaluation Strategies

Assessment and evaluation should reflect the student's achievement of outcomes. Differential forms of assessment/evaluation do not reflect a change in the outcomes for students with moderate needs, but rather they provide options for students in demonstrating what they know and are able to do.

Assessment/Evaluation Strategies

The following strategies may assist in meeting a broader range of student learning needs in the areas of assessment and evaluation:

❒ **various assessment/evaluation practices**

- project work (group or independent including scheduling of time frame for completion of components)
- observation of student performance, behaviours, language
- oral interviews, conferencing
- portfolio assessment
- homework assignments
- self evaluation
- demonstrations, performance interviews
- authentic assessment tasks
- peer evaluation

❒ **differentiating teacher-made tests**

- developing rubrics
- reducing the number of alternatives on multiple choice
- experimenting with the layout and format
  e.g., number of items per page; framing items or pages
- providing word banks for fill-ins
- teaching students to determine how to answer a question by focussing on key words
  e.g., define, explain, list, compare
- highlighting directions
- highlighting key words in questions
  e.g., define, explain, list, compare
- providing expanded, rewritten, or oral directions
- teaching students to gauge the length of an answer required based on key words in the question and the value of the question
- providing examples
- varying the input mode
  e.g., reading the test orally to the student; putting the test on tape

Assessment/Evaluation Strategies (continued)

- varying the output mode
  e.g., varying the written requirement (paragraph, sentence, outline, graphic organizer); using oral response or dictated response; allowing the student to tape his/her response to then revise, transcribe, or submit as taped
- varying the time for writing
  e.g., extending time for students who need it; testing in two or more short sessions for students with attention difficulties
- varying the location
  e.g., changing environment for students who are easily distracted or who require support that could distract others
- changing the timing of the test
  e.g., administering the test during an identified optimum time for the student (some students with ADHD or significant behaviour difficulties may be able to demonstrate their learning only at specifically identified times, for example, early in the morning)

❒ **ongoing systems of recording**

- curriculum-based checklists of outcomes
- graphs, charts
- anecdotal comments based on observation of student
  e.g., individual student folders; coloured note stickers

To consider ...

- cues can lessen the level of difficulty and/or trigger prior knowledge as well as decreasing the amount of processing required of the student

- collaborate with other classroom/subject teachers and resource teacher to share various assessment/evaluation formats and to get feedback on your efforts

Motivational Strategies

The kinds of interactions that occur between a teacher and his or her students can be planned to facilitate learning. The student's degree of commitment to the learning process and the maintenance of a positive learning climate in the classroom should be part of instructional planning. A proactive approach can prevent many difficulties and can facilitate behavioural programming for individual students, should it be needed.

Motivational Strategies

The following strategies may assist teachers in increasing student motivation:

- ❒ **varying the level and frequency of feedback**
  immediate versus delayed; constant versus frequent versus intermittent

- ❒ **matching motivational strategies to the student's learning style and interests**

- ❒ **communicating successes with the student's home**
  e.g., notes, phone calls

- ❒ **contracting with students for work to be completed or desired behaviours to be targeted**

- ❒ **tangible and intangible reinforcers**
  e.g., a "choosing-time," where the student is rewarded by being allowed to choose a preferred activity; a special teacher-chosen activity; time to share a book one-on-one with the teacher or principal; special duty or classroom responsibility

- ❒ **students keeping their own private progress charts to track attainment of an outcome**

- ❒ **varying the intensity, frequency, and timing of help given**

- ❒ **being consistent and "up front" about expectations**

- ❒ **establishing friendship circles or buddy systems for those who need extra social, physical, or academic support**

- ❒ **using mentors from the school or from the community**

To consider ...

- parent/guardian involvement/participation helps to ensure consistency of strategy implementation
- students need to know their teachers care about them
- collaborate with the guidance counselor and fellow teachers to plan effective behavioural and motivational strategies to meet specific needs
- know when it is appropriate to make a referral for additional assessment and/or consultation from support personnel such as a school psychologist

Environmental Strategies

Learning in life occurs in a wide range of environments. There are many environments both within the school and outside that can facilitate effective learning. Exploration of various locations as well as of the physical aspects of the learning environment can accommodate a variety of learning needs and preferences.

Environmental Strategies

The following strategies may assist in addressing a broad range of student learning needs:

- ❒ **specific seating arrangements**
  e.g., near or away from the teacher; near a particular student; chosen by the student; chosen by the teacher

- ❒ **variable seating**
  so that students who need to can move to different locations within the room periodically

- ❒ **varying lighting conditions**
  e.g., seating near versus away from a window; using a desk lamp to focus attention; lowering lighting for impact in certain teaching situations

- ❒ **using headphones to block noise or to provide quiet sounds or music**

- ❒ **using study carrels to focus attention**

- ❒ **a variety of sub-environments in the classroom**
  e.g., a noisy, messy area for producing, experimenting, or creating; an area with individual carrels for more focussed work; a relaxed quiet area for reading or writing

- ❒ **creating more desk space for those students who need a larger working area**

- ❒ **creating more organized storage space (e.g., boxes) for students who need help organizing their materials**

- ❒ **varying the temperature**
  e.g., finding comfortable heating levels; access to fresh air where possible

To consider ...

- the classroom is not the only location for effective learning to occur; think about:

  –**other locations in the school**
  e.g., library/resource room, gym, resource room/learning centre, multi-purpose rooms, joining with another class for activities

  –**community locations**
  e.g., park, playground, forest, river, sports track, business factory, museum, heritage property, police station, hospital, university, or college

- collaborate with other teachers and the administration in your school to explore maximizing and sharing spaces within the school

Appendix IV

Sample Referral Forms, Program Planning Team

SAMPLE
SOUTH SHORE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
REFERRAL - CORE PROGRAM PLANNING TEAM
PROBLEM SOLVING SESSION

Student's Name: _____ Date of Birth (D/M/Y): _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Referred by: _____
Date: _____

Brief summary of concerns:

What interventions and/or adaptations have been tried, and what successes and difficulties have resulted?

What specific request is being made?

Action Taken:

__ Referral to Program Planning Team
__ Copy to Confidential File
__ Referral to Student Development Coordinator

Copy to Confidential File

SAMPLE

PROGRAM PLANNING TEAM REFERRAL

NAME OF STUDENT: _____ _____ GRADE: _____

REFERRED BY: _____ REFERRAL DATE: _____

REASON FOR REFERRAL:

_____

_____

_____

INTERVENTION TO DATE: (Please complete attached form.)

CHECK:
- __ Telephone contact
- __ Written report to home
- __ Student interview
- __ Parent meeting
- __ In class adaptations
- __ Other

_____

_____

_____

I am interested in the following as it relates to the above student:

- __ Further assessment information
- __ Instructional strategies
- __ Materials for program implementation
- __ Adapted evaluation methods
- __ Consultation with additional team members
- __ Strategies to support the family

Referral received by: _____
Signature

Sample submitted by the Halifax Regional School Board

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Interventions to Date:

Description of Student's Strengths:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Description of Student's Needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Record of Recent Assessments (Informal and Formal):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Strategies/Adaptations Tried:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Two or three outcomes that you want the student to be able to achieve this year (academic, social, behavioural):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Program Planning Team Referral

To be completed by Program Planning Team

Date of Meeting:_____

Follow-up Recommendations:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c.c. : Program Planning Team
: Cum Card
: Referring Source

Appendix V

Policy 2.3, *Special Education Policy Manual* (Program Planning Teams)

Policy 2.3

Each school board shall establish, at the school level, program planning teams responsible for programming and monitoring.

2.3 Guidelines

The responsibility for ensuring that appropriate programs are provided for all students, including those with special needs, lies with the principal. The planning and implementation of programs should be accomplished through a team process. The core team should comprise the school principal or vice-principal, teachers involved (e.g. classroom teachers, resource teachers), parents/guardians, and students as appropriate. Selection of additional members will depend on the special needs of the students and on the personnel resources of the school board and the community.

For example, additional members may include:

- special services supervisor
- school counsellor
- school psychologist
- speech-language pathologist
- itinerant teacher
- representatives of other agencies

2.3 **Education Act:** Sections 24, 25, 26, 38, 64 (d)
Other References: *Public School Programs* 1.9.3, Department of Education and Culture, 1993-95.

Appendix VI

Policy 2.6, *Special Education Policy Manual* (Individual Program Plans)

Policy 2.6

An individual program plan (IPP), based on the student's strengths and needs, will be developed and implemented for every student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.

2.6 Guidelines

Each school district will establish procedures and guidelines for the development and implementation of individual program plans.

Teaching practice necessarily includes the use of a variety of teaching strategies to enable students to meet or to extend their learning beyond the designated outcomes. The manipulation of additional variables such as time, classroom organization and evaluation techniques will also be necessary to meet individual student needs. Provided the designated outcomes are not substantially altered, these procedures do not require an individual program plan, although specific changes should be documented in the student's cumulative file, e.g. oral evaluation in place of written evaluation, curriculum compacting (Policy 2.2, Stage 4).

When the manipulation of instructional variables is not sufficient to address student needs in the context of the prescribed curriculum, the program planning team is responsible for the development of an individual program plan. Program plans should be developed in the context of the broad curriculum outcomes for each core program. For students whose special needs include non-academic areas, the individual program plan should detail the outcomes involved and the supports and services needed to enable the student to reach these outcomes. (Appendix i: Definitions)

2.6 Procedures

The components of the individual program plan for each student should include the following:

1. A summary of student strengths and needs

The summary should include information on the student's physical, behavioral, social, and academic strengths and needs. A brief summary of the types of assessments used in determining strengths and needs should be included in the individual program plan, while more complete results/reports should be kept in the student's confidential file.

2. Annual individualized outcomes (goals)

Annual individualized outcomes are statements of expected achievement over a one-year period. These statements are estimates of future performance based on past achievement, present performance, and priority areas of desired development. Priority areas should be established in consultation with parents through the program planning team process to ensure a co-ordinated effort between the home and school.

3. Specific individualized outcomes (objectives)

Specific individualized outcomes are statements outlining specific steps which lead to the attainment of the broader outcomes. Specific outcomes are arranged according to the developmental process involved and the expected progression toward identified broad outcomes. The specific outcomes are the basis for the evaluation of the student's growth toward attainment of the annual individualized outcomes. Specific outcomes should be grouped under curriculum outcomes in each program where applicable.

4. Recommended services

These services may be divided into three categories:

a) educational strategies (e.g. specific instructional strategies, organizational techniques, evaluation procedures)
b) special materials/equipment (e.g. computers, alternative formal materials, optical aids, specially designed furniture);
c) human resources (e.g. resource teachers, speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists, teacher/student assistants, mentors, etc.).

5. Responsibility areas

Specific responsibilities for teaching, modifying/extending and evaluating objectives must be assigned to individuals with the appropriate professional competence. However, the overall responsibility for the evaluation of the plan rests with the team as a whole. The team is responsible for ensuring that the plan outlines a comprehensive and cohesive approach to meeting student needs.

6. Review dates

The program planning team is responsible for setting dates for the review of the overall plan. However, individual team members are responsible for the ongoing evaluation of their designated responsibility areas. The overall plan should be reviewed at least twice in each year. Dates for the review of the program plan should be set at each program planning team meeting.

7. Signatures

The IPP is signed at a meeting with the parents at which the team members from the school or representatives of that group review and discuss the program. The signatures indicate agreement on the IPP. In cases where parents/guardians do not agree with the program plan, an appeal procedure may be initiated. However, all efforts should be made to resolve disputes through discussions, and mediation before a formal review (appeal) is required. (Policy 1.8). If the school is experiencing difficulty in having the parents attend a meeting, the Supervisor of Special Services should be notified. Parents should be provided a copy of the IPP.

2.6 **Education Act:** Sections 25, 26, 38, 64 (2)
Other References: *Public School Programs* 1.9.3, Department of Education and Culture, 1993-95.
The Nova Scotia Student Cumulative Record Folder Completion Instructions, Department of Education and Culture, 1988.

Appendix VII

Policy 2.7, *Special Education Policy Manual* (Transition Planning)

Policy 2.7

Transition planning is part of the individual planning process for each student with special needs.

2.7 Guidelines

Transition implies passage from one stage to another. While this applies at all stages of a student's career from preschool to grade 12, special emphasis should be placed on particular phases of this process; for example, the transitions from preschool to school entry, from elementary to junior high, junior high to high school and high-school-to community. School to community transition is the crossover from youth to adulthood and carries with it expectations of independent living, employment and recreational pursuits. Transition planning must take into consideration all major aspects of each student's life experiences.

2.7 Procedures

1. Transition planning is an integral part of the ongoing team planning process throughout the school years. Careful attention should be given to the composition of the program planning team to ensure that all those involved or potentially involved with the student's program are part of the decision-making process.

2. The process of school-to-community transition is an integral part of the individual program planning process.

3. School-to-community transition planning should begin when a student enters junior high school.

4. School-to-community transition planning should address any area necessary for students to participate successfully in education, employment, housing, friendships, recreation, medical services, transportation, community activities, financial management, etc.

2.7 **Education Act:** 25 (2), 26 (g), 64 (d)
Other References: Manual and Video, Transition Planning in Nova Scotia, Department of Education and Culture, 1994.
P & R Release, Statement on Integration, Department of Education and Culture, 1991. (Appendix iv)

Appendix VIII

Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada

Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada

The *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* contains a set of principles and related guidelines generally accepted by professional organizations as indicative of fair assessment practice within the Canadian educational context. Assessments depend on professional judgment; the principles and related guidelines presented in this document identify the issues to consider in exercising this professional judgment and in striving for the fair and equitable assessment of all students.

Assessment is broadly defined in the *Principles* as the process of collecting and interpreting information that can be used (i) to inform students, and their parents/guardians where applicable, about the progress they are making toward attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to be learned or acquired, and (ii) to inform the various personnel who make educational decisions (instructional, diagnostic, placement, promotion, graduation, curriculum planning, program development, policy) about students. Principles and related guidelines are set out for both developers and users of assessments. Developers include people who construct assessment methods and people who set policies for particular assessment programs. Users include people who select and administer assessment methods, commission assessment development services, or make decisions on the basis of assessment results and findings. The roles may overlap, as when a teacher or instructor develops and administers an assessment instrument and then scores and interprets the students' responses, or when a ministry or department of education or local school system commissions the development and implementation of an assessment program and scoring services and makes decisions on the basis of the assessment results.

The *Principles of Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* was developed by a Working Group guided by a Joint Advisory Committee. The Joint Advisory Committee included two representatives appointed by each of the following professional organizations: Canadian Education Association, Canadian School Boards Association, Canadian Association for School Administrators, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association, Canadian Association of School Psychologists, Canadian Council for Exceptional Children, Canadian Psychological Association, and Canadian Society for the Study of Education. In addition, the Joint Advisory Committee included a representative of the Provincial and Territorial Ministries and Departments of Education.

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The Joint Advisory Committee invites users to share their experiences in working with the *Principles* and to submit any suggestions that could be used to revise and improve the *Principles*. Comments and suggestions should be sent to the Joint Advisory Committee at the address shown below.

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Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada. (1993). Edmonton, Alberta: Joint Advisory Committee. (Mailing Address: Joint Advisory Committee, Centre for Research in Applied Measurement and Evaluation, 3-104 Education Building North, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G5).

The *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* is the product of a comprehensive effort to reach consensus on what constitutes sound principles to guide the fair assessment of students. The principles and their related guidelines should be considered neither exhaustive nor mandatory; however, organizations, institutions, and individual professionals who endorse them are committing themselves **to endeavor to follow their intent and spirit** so as to achieve fair and equitable assessments of students.

Organization and Use of the Principles

The principles and their related guidelines are organized in two parts. Part A is directed at assessments carried out by teachers at the elementary and secondary school levels. Part A is also applicable at the post-secondary level with some modifications, particularly with respect to whom assessment results are reported. Part B is directed at standardized assessments developed external to the classroom by commercial test publishers, provincial and territorial ministries and departments of education, and local school jurisdictions[1].

Five general principles of fair assessment practices are provided in each Part. Each principle is followed by a series of guidelines for practice. In the case of Part A where no prior sets of standards for fair practice exist, a brief comment accompanies each guideline to help clarify and illuminate the guideline and its application.

The Joint Advisory Committee recognizes that in the field of assessment some terms are defined or used differently by different groups of people. To maintain as much consistency in terminology as possible, an attempt has been made to employ generic terms in the *Principles*.

[1] Boards, boroughs, counties, and school districts.

A. Classroom Assessments

Part A is directed toward the development and selection of assessment methods and their use in the classroom by teachers. Based on the conceptual framework provided in the *Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students* (1990), it is organized around five interrelated themes:

I. Developing and Choosing Methods for Assessment
II. Collecting Assessment Information
III. Judging and Scoring Student Performance
IV. Summarizing and Interpreting Results
V. Reporting Assessment Findings

The Joint Advisory Committee acknowledges that not all of the guidelines are equally applicable in all circumstances. However, consideration of the full set of principles and guidelines within Part A should help to achieve fairness and equity for the students to be assessed.

I. Developing and Choosing Methods for Assessment

Assessment methods should be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.

Assessment method is used here to refer to the various strategies and techniques that teachers might use to acquire assessment information. These strategies and techniques include, but are not limited to, observations, text- and curriculum-embedded questions and tests, paper-and-pencil tests, oral questioning, benchmarks or reference sets, interviews, peer-and self-assessments, standardized criterion- referenced and norm-referenced tests, performance assessments, writing samples, exhibitions, portfolio assessment, and project and product assessments. Several labels have been used to describe subsets of these alternatives, with the most common being "direct assessment," "authentic assessment," "performance assessment," and "alternative assessment." However, for the purpose of the *Principles*, the term assessment method has been used to encompass all the strategies and techniques that might be used to collect information from students about their progress toward attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors to be learned.

1. Assessment methods should be developed or chosen so that inferences drawn about the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors possessed by each student are valid and not open to misinterpretation.

Validity refers to the degree to which inferences drawn from assessments results are meaningful. Therefore, development or selection of assessment methods for collecting information should be clearly linked to the purposes for which inferences and decisions are to be made. For example, to monitor the progress of students as proficiencies and

editors of their own work, it is better to assign an actual writing task, to allow time and resources for editing (dictionaries, handbooks, etc.), and to observe students for evidence of proofreading and editing skill as they work than to use a test containing discrete items on usage and grammar that are relatively devoid of context.

2. Assessment methods should be clearly related to the goals and objectives of instruction, and be compatible with the instructional approaches used.

To enhance validity, assessment methods should be in harmony with the instructional objectives to which they are referenced. Planning an assessment design at the same time as planning instruction will help integrate the two in meaningful ways. Such joint planning provides an overall perspective on the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to be learned and assessed, and the contexts in which they will be learned and assessed.

3. When developing or choosing assessment methods, consideration should be given to the consequences of the decisions to be made in light of the obtained information.

The outcomes of some assessments may be more critical than others. For example, misinterpretation of the level of performance on an end-of-unit test may result in incorrectly holding a student from proceeding to the next instructional unit in a continuous progress situation. In such "high-stake" situations, every effort should be made to ensure the assessment method will yield consistent and valid results. "Low stake" situations, such as determining if a student has correctly completed an in-class assignment, can be less stringent. Low stake assessments are often repeated during the course of a reporting period using a variety of methods. If the results are aggregated to form a summary comment or grade, the summary will have greater consistency and validity than its component elements.

4. More than one assessment method should be used to ensure comprehensive and consistent indications of student performance.

To obtain a more complete picture or profile of a student's knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors, and to discern consistent patterns and trends, more than one assessment method should be used. Student knowledge might be assessed using completion items; process or reasoning skills might be assessed by observing performance on a relevant task; evaluation skills might be assessed by reflecting upon the discussion with a student about what materials to include in a portfolio. Self-assessment may help to clarify and add meaning to the assessment of a written communication, science project, piece of art work, or an attitude. Use of more than one method will also help minimize inconsistency brought about by different sources of measurement error (for example, poor performance because of an "off-day"; lack of agreement among items included in a test, rating scale, or questionnaire; lack of agreement among observers; instability across time).

5. Assessment methods should be suited to the backgrounds and prior experiences of students.

Assessment methods should be free from bias brought about by student factors extraneous to the purpose of the assessment. Possible factors to consider include culture, developmental stage, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, language, special interests, and special needs. Students' success in answering questions on a test or in an oral quiz, for example, should not be dependent upon prior cultural knowledge, such as understanding an allusion to a cultural tradition or value, unless such knowledge falls

within the content domain being assessed. All students should be given the same opportunity to display their strengths.

6. Content and language that would generally be viewed as sensitive, sexist, or offensive should be avoided.

The vocabulary and problem situation in each test item or performance task should not favour or discriminate against any group of students. Steps should be taken to ensure that stereotyping is not condoned. Language that might be offensive to particular groups of students should be avoided. A judicious use of different roles for males and females and for minorities and the careful use of language should contribute to more effective and, therefore, fairer assessments.

7. Assessment instruments translated into a second language or transferred from another context or location should be accompanied by evidence that inferences based on these instruments are valid for the intended purpose.

Translation of an assessment instrument from one language to another is a complex and demanding task. Similarly, the adoption or modification of an instrument developed in another country is often not simple and straightforward. Care must be taken to ensure that the results from translated and imported instruments are not misinterpreted or misleading.

II. Collecting Assessment Information

Students should be provided with a sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviors being assessed.

Assessment information can be collected in a variety of ways (observations, oral questioning, interviews, oral and written reports, paper-and-pencil tests). The guidelines which follow are not all equally applicable to each of these procedures.

1. Students should be told why assessment information is being collected and how this information will be used.

Students who know the purpose of an assessment are in a position to respond in a manner that will provide information relevant to that purpose. For example, if students know that their participation in a group activity is to be used to assess cooperative skills, they can be encouraged to contribute to the activity. If students know that the purpose of an assessment is to diagnose strengths and weaknesses rather than to assign a grade, they can be encouraged to reveal weaknesses as well as strengths. If the students know that the purpose is to assign a grade, they are well advised to respond in a way that will maximize strength. This is especially true for assessment methods that allow students to make choices, such as with optional writing assignments or research projects.

2. An assessment procedure should be used under conditions suitable to its purpose and form.

Optimum conditions should be provided for obtaining data from and information about students so as to maximize the validity and consistency of the data and information collected. Common conditions include such things as proper light and ventilation, comfortable room temperature, and freedom from distraction (e.g., movement in and out of the room, noise). Adequate work-space, sufficient materials, and adequate time limits appropriate to the purpose and form of the assessment are also necessary. For example, if the intent is to assess student participation in a small group, adequate work space should be provided for each student group, with sufficient space between subgroups so that the groups do not interfere with or otherwise influence one another and so that the teacher has the same opportunity to observe and assess each student within each group.

3. In assessments involving observations, checklists, or rating scales, the number of characteristics to be assessed at one time should be small enough and concretely described so that the observations can be made accurately.

Student behaviors often change so rapidly that it may not be possible simultaneously to observe and record all the behavior components. In such instances, the number of components to be observed should be reduced and the components should be described as concretely as possible. One way to manage an observation is to divide the behavior into a series of components and assess each component in sequence. By limiting the number of components assessed at one time, the data and information become more focused, and time is not spent observing later behavior until prerequisite behaviors are achieved.

4. The directions provided to students should be clear, complete, and appropriate for the ability, age and grade level of the students.

Lack of understanding of the assessment task may prevent maximum performance or display of the behavior called for. In the case of timed assessments, for example, teachers should describe the time limits, explain how students might distribute their time among parts for those assessment instruments with parts, and describe how students should record their responses. For a portfolio assessment, teachers should describe the criteria to be used to select the materials to be included in a portfolio, who will select these materials, and, if more than one person will be involved in the selection process, how the judgments from the different people will be combined. Where appropriate, sample material and practice should be provided to further increase the likelihood that instructions will be understood.

5. In assessments involving selection items (e.g., true-false, multiple-choice), the directions should encourage students to answer all items without threat of penalty.

A correction formula is sometimes used to discourage "guessing" on selection items. The formula is intended to encourage students to omit items for which they do not know the answer rather than to "guess" the answer. Because research evidence indicates that the benefits expected from the correction are not realized, the use of the formula is discouraged. Students should be encouraged to use whatever partial knowledge they have when choosing their answers, and to answer all items.

6. When collecting assessment information, interactions with students should be appropriate and consistent.

Care must be taken when collecting assessment information to treat all students fairly. For example, when oral presentations by students are assessed, questioning and probes should be distributed among the students so that all students have the same opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. While writing a paper-and-pencil test, a student may ask to have an ambiguous item clarified, and, if warranted, the item should be explained to the entire class.

7. Unanticipated circumstances that interfere with the collection of assessment information should be noted and recorded.

Events such as a fire drill, an unscheduled assembly, or insufficient materials may interfere in the way in which assessment information is collected. Such events should be recorded and subsequently considered when interpreting the information obtained.

8. A written policy should guide decisions about the use of alternate procedures for collecting assessment information from students with special needs and students whose proficiency in the language of instruction is inadequate for them to respond in the anticipated manner.

It may be necessary to develop alternative assessment procedures to ensure a consistent and valid assessment of those students who, because of special needs or inadequate language, are not able to respond to an assessment method (for example, oral instead of written format, individual instead of group administered, translation into first language, providing additional time). The use of alternate procedures should be guided by a written policy developed by teachers, administrators, and other jurisdictional personnel.

III. Judging and Scoring Student Performance

Procedures for judging or scoring student performance should be appropriate for the assessment method used and be consistently applied and monitored.

Judging and scoring refers to the process of determining the quality of a student's performance, the appropriateness of an attitude or behavior, or the correctness of an answer. Results derived from judging and scoring may be expressed as written or oral comments, ratings, categorizations, letters, numbers, or as some combination of these forms.

1. Before an assessment method is used, a procedure for scoring should be prepared to guide the process of judging the quality of a performance or product, the appropriateness of an attitude or behavior, or the correctness of an answer.

To increase consistency and validity, properly developed scoring procedures should be used. Different assessment methods require different forms of scoring. Scoring selection items (true-false, multiple-choice, matching) requires the identification of the correct or, in some instances, best answer. Guides for scoring essays might include factors such as the major points to be included in the "best answer" or models or exemplars corresponding to different levels of performance at different age levels and against which comparisons can be made. Procedures for judging other performances or products might include specification of the characteristics to be rated in performance terms and, to the extent possible, clear descriptions of the different levels of performance or quality of a product.

2. Before an assessment method is used, students should be told how their responses or the information they provide will be judged or scored.

> Informing students prior to the use of an assessment method about the scoring procedures to be followed should help ensure that similar expectations are held by both students and their teachers.

3. Care should be taken to ensure that results are not influenced by factors that are not relevant to the purpose of the assessment.

> Various types of errors occur in scoring, particularly when a degree of subjectivity is involved (e.g., marking essays, rating a performance, judging a debate). For example, if the intent of a written communication is to assess content alone, the scoring should not be influenced by stylistic factors such as vocabulary and sentence structure. Personal bias errors are indicated by a general tendency to rate all students in approximately the same way (e.g., too generously or too severely). Halo effects can occur when a rater's general impression of a student influences the rating of individual characteristics or when a previous rating influences a subsequent rating. Pooled results from two or more independent raters (teachers, other students) will generally produce a more consistent description of student performance than a result obtained from a single rater. In combining results, the personal biases of individual raters tend to cancel one another.

4. Comments formed as part of scoring should be based on the responses made by the students and presented in a way that students can understand and use them.

> Comments, in oral and written form, are provided to encourage learning and to point out correctable errors or inconsistencies in performance. In addition, comments can be used to clarify a result. Such feedback should be based on evidence pertinent to the learning outcomes being assessed.

5. Any changes made during scoring should be based upon a demonstrated problem with the initial scoring procedure. The modified procedure should then be used to rescore all previously scored responses.

> Anticipating the full range of student responses is a difficult task for several forms of assessment. There is always the danger that unanticipated responses or incidents that are relevant to the purposes of the assessment may be overlooked. Consequently, scoring should be continuously monitored for unanticipated responses and these responses should be taken into proper account.

6. An appeal process should be described to students at the beginning of each school year or course of instruction that they may use to appeal a result.

> Situations may arise where a student believes a result incorrectly reflects his/her level of performance. A procedure by which students can appeal such a situation should be developed and made known to them. This procedure might include, for example, checking for addition or other recording errors or, perhaps, judging or scoring by a second qualified person.

IV. Summarizing and Interpreting Results

Procedures for summarizing and interpreting asssessment results should yield accurate and informative representations of a student's performance in relation to the goals and objectives of instruction for the reporting period.

Summarizing and interpreting results refers to the procedures used to combine assessment results in the form of summary comments and grades which indicate both a student's level of performance and the valuing of that performance.

1. Procedures for summarizing and interpreting results for a reporting period should be guided by a written policy.

   Summary comments and grades, when interpreted, serve a variety of functions. They inform students of their progress. Parents, teachers, counsellors, and administrators use them to guide learning, determine promotion, identify students for special attention (e.g., honours, remediation), and to help students develop future plans. Comments and grades also provide a basis for reporting to other schools in the case of school transfer and, in the case of senior high school students, post-secondary institutions and prospective employers. They are more likely to serve their many functions and those functions are less likely to be confused if they are guided by a written rationale or policy sensitive to these different needs. This policy should be developed by teachers, school administrators, and other jurisdictional personnel in consultation with representatives of the audiences entitled to receive a report of summary comments and grades.

2. The way in which summary comments and grades are formulated and interpreted should be explained to students and their parents/guardians.

   Students and their parents/guardians have the "right-to-know" how student performance is summarized and interpreted. With this information, they can make constructive use of the findings and fully review the assessment procedures followed.

   It should be noted that some aspects of summarizing and interpreting are based upon a teacher's best judgment of what is good or appropriate. This judgment is derived from training and experience and may be difficult to describe specifically in advance. In such circumstances, examples might be used to show how summary comments and grades were formulated and interpreted.

3. The individual results used and the process followed in deriving summary comments and grades should be described in sufficient detail so that the meaning of a summary comment or grade is clear.

   Summary comments and grades are best interpreted in the light of an adequate description of the results upon which they are based, the relative emphasis given to each result, and the process followed to combine the results. Many assessments conducted during a reporting period are of a formative nature. The intent of these assessments (e.g., informal observations, quizzes, text-and-curriculum embedded questions, oral questioning) is to inform decisions regarding daily learning, and to inform or otherwise refine the instructional sequence. Other assessments are of a summative nature. It is the summative

assessments that should be considered when formulating and interpreting summary comments and grades for the reporting period.

4. Combining disparate kinds of results into a single summary should be done cautiously. To the extent possible, achievement, effort, participation, and other behaviors should be graded separately.

A single comment or grade cannot adequately serve all functions. For example, letter grades used to summarize achievement are most meaningful when they represent only achievement. When they include other aspects of student performance such as effort, amount (as opposed to quality) of work completed, neatness, class participation, personal conduct, or punctuality, not only do they lose their meaningfulness as a measure of achievement, but they also suppress information concerning other important aspects of learning and invite inequities. Thus, to more adequately and fairly summarize the different aspects of student performance, letter grades for achievement might be complemented with alternate summary forms (e.g., checklists, written comments) suitable for summarizing results related to these other behaviors.

5. Summary comments and grades should be based on more than one assessment result so as to ensure adequate sampling of broadly defined learning outcomes.

More than one or two assessments are needed to adequately assess performance in multi-facet areas such as Reading. Under-representation of such broadly defined constructs can be avoided by ensuring that the comments and grades used to summarize performance are based on multiple assessments, each referenced to a particular facet of the construct.

6. The results used to produce summary comments and grades should be combined in a way that ensures that each result receives its intended emphasis or weight.

When the results of a series of assessments are combined into a summary comment, care should be taken to ensure that the actual emphasis placed on the various results matches the intended emphasis for each student.

When numerical results are combined, attention should be paid to differences in the variability, or spread, of the different sets of results and appropriate account taken where such differences exist. If, for example, a grade is to be formed from a series of paper-and-pencil tests, and if each test is to count equally in the grade, then the variability of each set of scores must be the same.

7. The basis for interpretation should be carefully described and justified.

Interpretation of the information gathered for a reporting period for a student is a complex and, at times, controversial issue. Such information, whether written or numerical, will be of little interest or use if it is not interpreted against some pertinent and defensible idea of what is good and what is poor. The frame of reference used for interpretation should be in accord with the type of decision to be made. Typical frames of reference are performance in relation to pre-specified standards, performance in relation to peers, performance in relation to aptitude or expected growth, and performance in terms of the amount of improvement or amount learned. If, for example, decisions are to be made as to whether or not a student is ready to move to the next unit in an instructional sequence, interpretations based on pre-specified standards would be most relevant.

8. Interpretations of assessment results should take account of the backgrounds and learning experiences of the students.

> Assessment results should be interpreted in relation to a student's personal and social context. Among the factors to consider are age, ability, gender, language, motivation, opportunity to learn, self-esteem, socio-economic background, special interests, special needs, and "test-taking" skills. Motivation to do school tasks, language capability, or home environment can influence learning of the concepts assessed, for example. Poor reading ability, poorly developed psycho-motor or manipulative skills, lack of test-taking skills, anxiety, and low self-esteem can lead to lower scores. Poor performance in an assessment may be attributable to a lack of opportunity to learn because required learning materials and supplies were not available, learning activities were not provided, or inadequate time was allowed for learning. When a student performs poorly, the possibility that one or more factors such as these might have interfered with a student's response or performance should be considered.

9. Assessment results that will be combined into summary comments and grades should be stored in a way that ensures their accuracy at the time they are summarized and interpreted.

> Comments and grades and their interpretations, formulated from a series of related assessments, can be no better than the data and information upon which they are based. Systematic data control minimizes errors which would otherwise be introduced into a student's record or information base, and provides protection of confidentiality.

10. Interpretations of assessment results should be made with due regard for limitations in the assessment methods used, problems encountered in collecting the information and judging or scoring it, and limitations in the basis used for interpretation.

> To be valid, interpretations must be based on results determined from assessment methods that are relevant and representative of the performance assessed. Administrative constraints, the presence of measurement error, and the limitations of the frames of reference used for interpretation also need to be accounted for.

V. Reporting Assessment Findings

Assessment reports should be clear, accurate, and of practical value to the audiences for whom they are intended.

1. The reporting system for a school or jurisdiction should be guided by a written policy. Elements to consider include such aspects as audiences, medium, format, content, level of detail, frequency, timing, and confidentiality.

   The policy to guide the preparation of school reports (e.g., reports of separate assessments; reports for a reporting period) should be developed by teachers, school administrators, and other jurisdictional personnel in consultation with representatives of the audiences entitled to receive a report. Cooperative participation not only leads to more adequate and helpful reporting, but also increases the likelihood that the reports will be understood and used by those for whom they are intended.

2 Written and oral reports should contain a description of the goals and objectives of instruction to which the assessments are referenced.

   The goals and objectives that guided instruction should serve as the basis for reporting. A report will be limited by a number of practical considerations, but the central focus should be on the instructional objectives and the types of performance that represent achievement of these objectives.

3. Reports should be complete in their descriptions of strengths and weaknesses of students, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

   Reports can be incorrectly slanted towards "faults" in a student or toward giving unqualified praise. Both biases reduce the validity and utility of assessment. Accuracy in reporting strengths and weaknesses helps to reduce systematic error and is essential for stimulating and reinforcing improved performance. Reports should contain the information that will assist and guide students, their parents/guardians, and teachers to take relevant follow-up actions.

4. The reporting system should provide for conferences between teachers and parents/guardians. Whenever it is appropriate, students should participate in these conferences.

   Conferences scheduled at regular intervals and, if necessary, upon request provide parents/guardians and, when appropriate, students with an opportunity to discuss assessment procedures, clarify and elaborate their understanding of the assessment results, summary comments and grades, and reports, and, where warranted, to work with teachers to develop relevant follow-up activities or action plans.

5. An appeal process should be described to students and their parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year or course of instruction that they may use to appeal a report.

Situations may arise where a student and his/her parents/guardian believe the summary comments and grades inaccurately reflect the level of performance of the student. A procedure by which they can appeal such a situation should be developed and made known to them (for example, in a school handbook or newsletter provided to students and their parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year).

6. Access to assessment information should be governed by a written policy that is consistent with applicable laws and with basic principles of fairness and human rights.

A written policy, developed by teachers, administrators, and other jurisdictional personnel, should be used to guide decisions regarding the release of student assessment information. Assessment information should be available to those people to whom it applies -- students and their parents/guardians, and to teachers and other educational personnel obligated by profession to use the information constructively on behalf of students. In addition, assessment information might be made available to others who justify their need for the information (e.g., post-secondary institutions, potential employers, researchers). Issues of informed consent should also be addressed in this policy.

7. Transfer of assessment information from one school to another should be guided by a written policy with stringent provisions to ensure the maintenance of confidentiality.

To make a student's transition from one school to another as smooth as possible, a clear policy should be prepared indicating the type of information to go with the student and the form in which it will be reported. Such a policy, developed by jurisdictional and ministry personnel, should ensure that the information transferred will be sent by and received by the appropriate person within the "sending" and "receiving" schools respectively.

B. Assessments Produced External to the Classroom

Part B applies to the development and use of standardized assessment methods used in student admissions, placement, certification, and educational diagnosis, and in curriculum and program evaluation. These methods are primarily developed by commercial test publishers, ministries and departments of education, and local school systems.

The principles and accompanying guidelines are organized in terms of four areas:

I. Developing and Selecting Methods for Assessment

II. Collecting and Interpreting Assessment Information

III. Informing Students Being Assessed

IV. Implementing Mandated Assessment Programs

The first three areas of Part B are adapted from the *Code of Fair Testing Practices for Education* (1988) developed in the United States. The principles and guidelines as modified in these three sections are intended to be consistent with the *Guidelines for Educational and Psychological Testing* (1986) developed in Canada. The fourth area has been added to contain guidelines particularly pertinent for mandated educational assessment and testing programs developed and conducted at the national, provincial, and local levels.

I. Developing and Selecting Methods for Assessment

Developers of assessment methods should strive to make them as fair as possible for use with students who have different backgrounds or special needs. Developers should provide the information users need to select methods appropriate to their assessment needs.	**Users should select assessment methods that have been developed to be as fair as possible for students who have different backgrounds or special needs. Users should select methods that are appropriate for the intended purposes and suitable for the students to be assessed.**
Developers should:	**Users should:**

1. Define what the assessment method is intended to measure and how it is to be used. Describe the characteristics of the students with which the method may be used.	1. Determine the purpose(s) for assessment and the characteristics of the students to be assessed. Then select an assessment method suited to that purpose and type of student.
2. Warn users against common misuses of the assessment method.	2. Avoid using assessment methods for purposes not specifically recommended by the developer unless evidence is obtained to support the intended use.
3. Describe the process by which the method was developed. Include a description of the theoretical basis, rationale for selection of content and procedures, and derivation of scores.	3. Review available assessment methods for relevance of content and appropriateness of scores with reference to the intended purpose(s) and characteristics of the students to be assessed.
4. Provide evidence that the assessment method yields results that satisfy its intended purpose(s).	4. Read independent evaluations of the methods being considered. Look for evidence supporting the claims of developers with reference to the intended application of each method.
5. Investigate the performance of students with special needs and students from different backgrounds. Report evidence of the consistency and validity of the results produced by the assessment method for these groups.	5. Ascertain whether the content of the assessment method and the norm group(s) or comparison group(s) are appropriate for the students to be assessed. For assessment methods developed in other regions or countries, look for evidence that the characteristics of the norm group(s) or comparison group(s) are comparable to the characteristics of the students to be assessed.
6. Provide potential users with representative samples or complete copies of questions or tasks, directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretation, and manuals.	6. Examine specimen sets, samples or complete copies of assessment instruments, directions, answer sheets, score reports, guidelines for interpretation, and manuals and judge their appropriateness for the intended application.

7. Review printed assessment methods and related materials for content or language generally perceived to be sensitive, offensive, or misleading.	7. Review printed assessment methods and related materials for content or language that would offend or mislead the students to be assessed.
8. Describe the specialized skills and training needed to administer an assessment method correctly, and the specialized knowledge to make valid interpretations of scores.	8. Ensure that all individuals who administer the assessment method, score the responses, and interpret the results have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform these tasks (e.g., learning assistance teachers, speech and language pathologists, counsellors, school psychologists, psychologists).
9. Limit sales of restricted assessment materials to persons who possess the necessary qualifications.	9. Ensure access to restricted assessment materials is limited to persons with the necessary qualifications.
10. Provide for periodic review and revision of content and norms, and, if applicable, passing or cut-off scores, and inform users.	10. Obtain information about the appropriateness of content, the recency of norms, and, if applicable, the appropriateness of the cut-off scores for use with the students to be assessed.
11. Provide evidence of the comparability of different forms of an instrument where the forms are intended to be interchangeable, such as parallel forms or the adaptation of an instrument for computer administration.	11. Obtain information about the comparability of interchangeable forms, including computer adaptations.
12. Provide evidence that an assessment method translated into a second language is valid for use with the second language. This information should be provided in the second language.	12. Obtain evidence about the validity of the use of an assessment method translated into a second language.
13. Advertise an assessment method in a way that states it can be used only for the purposes for which it was intended.	13. Verify advertising claims made for an assessment method.

II. Collecting and Interpreting Assessment Information

Developers should provide information to help users administer an assessment method correctly and interpret assessment results accurately.

Users should follow directions for proper administration of an assessment method and interpretation of assessment results.

Developers should:

1. Provide clear instructions for administering the assessment method and identify the qualifications that should be held by the people who should administer the method.

2. When feasible, make available appropriately modified forms of assessment methods for students with special needs or whose proficiency in the original language of administration is inadequate to respond in the anticipated manner.

3. Provide answer keys and describe procedures for scoring when scoring is to be done by the user.

4. Provide score reports or procedures for generating score reports that describe assessment results clearly and accurately. Identify and explain possible misinterpretations of the scores yielded by the scoring system (grade equivalents, percentile ranks, standard scores) used.

Users should:

1. Ensure that the assessment method is administered by qualified personnel or under the supervision of qualified personnel.

2. When necessary and feasible, use appropriately modified forms of assessment methods with students who have special needs or whose proficiency in the original language of administration is inadequate to respond in the anticipated manner.

   Ensure that instruments translated from one language to another are administered by persons who are proficient in the translated language.

3. Follow procedures for scoring as set out for the assessment method.

4. Interpret scores taking into account the limitations of the scoring system used. Avoid misinterpreting scores on the basis of unjustified assumptions about the scoring system (grade-equivalents, percentile ranks, standard scores) used.

5. Provide evidence of the effects on assessment results of such factors as speed, test- taking strategies, and attempts by students to present themselves favourably in their responses.	5. Interpret scores taking into account the effects of such factors as speed, test-taking strategies, and attempts by students to present themselves favourably in their responses.
6. Warn against using published norms with students who are not part of the population from which the norm or comparison sample was selected or when the prescribed assessment method has been modified in any way.	6. Interpret scores taking account of major differences between the norm group(s) or comparison group(s) and the students being assessed. Also take account of discrepancies between recommended and actual procedures and differences in familiarity with the assessment method between the norm group(s) and the students being assessed. Examine the need for local norms, and, if called for, develop these norms.
7. Describe how passing and cut-off scores, where used, were set and provide evidence regarding rates of misclassification.	7. Explain how passing or cut-off scores were set and discuss the appropriateness of these scores in terms of rates of misclassification. Examine the need for local passing or cut-off scores and, if called for, reset these scores.
8. Provide evidence to support the use of any computer scoring or computer generated interpretations. The documentation should include the rationale for such scoring and interpretations and their comparability with the results of scoring and interpretations made by qualified judges.	8. Ensure that any computer administration and computer interpretations of assessment results are accurate and appropriate for the intended use. If necessary, ensure that relevant information not included in computer reports is also considered.
	9. Observe jurisdictional policies regarding storage of and subsequent access to the results. Ensure that computer files are not accessible to unauthorized users.
	10. Ensure that all copyright and user agreements are observed.

III. Informing Students Being Assessed

Direct communication with those being assessed may come from either the developer or the user of the assessment method. In either case, the students being assessed and, where applicable, their parents/guardians should be provided with complete information presented in an understandable way.

Developers or Users should:

1. Develop materials and procedures for informing the students being assessed about the content of the assessment, types of question formats used, and appropriate strategies, if any, for responding.

2. Obtain informed consent from students or, where applicable, their parents/guardians in the case of individual assessments to be used for identification or placement purposes.

3. Provide students or, where applicable, their parents/guardians with information to help them decide whether to participate in the assessment when participation is optional.

4. Provide information to students or, where applicable, their parents/guardians of alternate assessment methods where available and applicable.

Control of results may rest with either the developer or user of the assessment method. In either case, the following steps should be followed.

Developers or Users should:

1. Provide students or, where applicable, their parents/guardians with information as to their rights to copies of instruments and completed answer forms, to reassessment, to rescoring, or to cancellation of scores and other records.

2. Inform students or, where applicable, their parents/guardians of the length of time assessment results will be kept on file and of the circumstances under which the assessment results will be released and to whom.

3. Describe the procedures that students or, where applicable, their parents/guardians may follow to register concerns about the assessment and endeavor to have problems resolved.

IV. Implementing Mandated Assessment Programs[2]

Under some circumstances, the administration of an assessment method is required by law. In such cases, the following guidelines should be added to the applicable guidelines outlined in Sections I, II, and III of Part B.

Developers and Users should:

1. Inform all persons with a stake in the assessment (administrators, teachers, students, parents/guardians) of the purpose(s) of the assessment, the uses to be made of the results, and who has access to the results.

2. Design and describe procedures for developing or choosing the methods of assessment, selecting students where sampling is used, administering the assessment materials, and scoring and summarizing student responses.

3. Interpret results in light of factors that might influence them. Important factors to consider include characteristics of the students, opportunity to learn, and comprehensiveness and representativeness of the assessment method in terms of the learning outcomes to be reported on.

4. Specify procedures for reporting, storing, controlling access to, and destroying results.

5. Ensure reports and explanations of results are consistent with the purpose(s) of the assessment, the intended uses of the results and the planned access to the results.

6. Provide reports and explanations of results that can be readily understood by the intended audience(s). If necessary, employ multiple reports designed for different audiences.

References

Code of Fair Testing Practices for Education. (1988). Washington, D.C.: Joint Committee on Testing Practices.

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[2] The Joint Advisory Committee wishes to point out it has not taken a position on the value of mandated assessment and testing programs. Rather, given the presence of these programs, the intent of the guidelines presented in Section IV, when combined with applicable guidelines in the first three sections of Part B, is to help ensure fairness and equity for the students being assessed.

Guidelines for Educational and Psychological Testing. (1986). Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Psychological Association.

Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students. (1990). Washington: D.C.: American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education, and National Educational Association.

The membership of the Working Group (WG) that developed the *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* and of the Joint Advisory Committee that oversaw the development was as follows:

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Appendix IX

Assessing and Evaluating Student Learning, *Foundation for the Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum*

With permission, Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation

Assessment
is the systematic process of gathering information on student learning.

Evaluation
is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon and summarizing assessment information, and making judgments or decisions based upon the information gathered.

Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning in English language arts. Without effective assessment and evaluation it is impossible to know whether students have learned, whether teaching has been effective or how best to address student learning needs. The quality of the assessment and evaluation in the educational process has a profound and well-established link to student performance. Research consistently shows that regular monitoring and feedback are essential to improving student learning. What is assessed and evaluated, how it is assessed and evaluated, and how results are communicated send clear messages to students and others about what is really valued—what is worth learning, how it should be learned, what elements of quality are considered most important, and how well students are expected to perform.

Teacher-developed assessments and evaluations have a wide variety of uses, such as

- providing feedback to improve student learning
- determining if curriculum outcomes have been achieved
- certifying that students have achieved certain levels of performance
- setting goals for future student learning
- communicating with parents about their children's learning
- providing information to teachers on the effectiveness of their teaching, the program and the learning environment
- meeting the needs of guidance and administration personnel

ASSESSMENT

To determine how well students are learning, assessment strategies have to be designed to systematically gather information on the achievement of the curriculum outcomes. In planning assessments, teachers should use a broad range of strategies in an appropriate balance to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Many types of assessment strategies can be used to gather such information, including, but not limited to,

- formal and informal observations
- work samples
- anecdotal records
- conferences
- teacher-made and other tests
- portfolios
- learning journals
- questioning
- performance assessment
- peer- and self-assessment

EVALUATION

Evaluation involves teachers and others in analyzing and reflecting upon information about student learning gathered in a variety of ways. This process requires

- developing clear criteria and guidelines for assigning marks or grades to student work
- synthesizing information from multiple sources
- weighing and balancing all available information
- using a high level of professional judgment in making decisions based upon that information

REPORTING

Reporting on student learning should focus on the extent to which students have achieved the curriculum outcomes. Reporting involves communicating the summary and interpretation of information about student learning to various audiences who require it. Teachers have a special responsibility to explain accurately what progress students have made in their learning and to respond to parent and student inquiries about learning.

Narrative reports on progress and achievement can provide information on student learning which letter or number grades alone cannot. Such reports might, for example, suggest ways in which students can improve their learning and identify ways in which teachers and parents can best provide support.

Effective communication with parents regarding their children's progress is essential in fostering successful home-school partnerships. The report card is one means of reporting individual student progress. Other means include the use of conferences, notes and phone calls.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In order to provide accurate, useful information about the achievement and instructional needs of students, certain guiding principles for the development, administration and use of assessments must be followed. *Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada* articulates five basic assessment principles.

- Assessment strategies should be appropriate for and compatible with the purpose and context of the assessment.
- Students should be provided with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, or behaviours being assessed.
- Procedures for judging or scoring student performance should be appropriate for the assessment strategy used and be consistently applied and monitored.
- Procedures for summarizing and interpreting assessment results should yield accurate and informative representations of a student's performance in relation to the curriculum outcomes for the reporting period.
- Assessment reports should be clear, accurate and of practical value to the audience for whom they are intended.

These principles highlight the need for assessment which ensures that

- the best interests of the student are paramount
- assessment informs teaching and promotes learning
- assessment is an integral and ongoing part of the learning process and is clearly related to the curriculum outcomes
- assessment is fair and equitable to all students and involves multiple sources of information

While assessments may be used for different purposes and audiences, all assessments must give each student optimal opportunity to demonstrate what he/she knows and can do.

ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

Using a Variety of Assessment Strategies

The assessment program should reflect the full range of student learning in English language arts and involve the use of a variety of information-gathering strategies which allow teachers to address students' diverse backgrounds, learning styles and needs, and allow students a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

This variety of assessment strategies should

- enable teachers to assess student performance on specific tasks
- provide information about how students learn as well as what they learn
- take into consideration students' abilities both to learn and to apply their learning
- enable teachers to observe overall performance
- provide multiple indicators of student performance
- reflect curriculum emphases
- reflect that experimentation, risk taking and creativity are valued
- enable students to discover their own interests, strengths and weaknesses
- engage students in assessing, reflecting upon and improving their own learning
- encourage students to take responsibility for their own growth
- engage students in assessing their own and others' skills in co-operative and collaborative projects

Specific Strategies

Anecdotal Records

Observations of students can serve as a record of how and what they are learning. Comments, questions and observations might be noted in a log or notebook, on index cards or post-it notes while students are engaged in authentic learning experiences, for example,

- during reading or writing workshops
- as students work with a group on a task that requires collaboration
- when they participate in an oral reading activity such as readers' theatre
- during interviews and conferences

It is important that teachers take the time necessary and use effective techniques for recording and analyzing anecdotal notes. Effective techniques of analyzing anecdotal records include making inferences from the notes, looking for developmental trends or patterns and identifying both strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching. Anecdotal records should lead to interpretation and explanations of patterns of learning which emerge over time. Gathering, recording and reflecting on anecdotal comments based on systematic observations of students' learning and language processes yield rich information for making judgments or decisions.

Checklists

Developing checklists to use in conjunction with other assessment strategies (such as anecdotal comments) gives teachers a useful strategy for

- clarifying precisely what behaviours are indicative of successful learning in a given context
- focussing observations
- recording whether or not a particular characteristic is present
- providing consistency from one observation to the next
- documenting changes over time

Checklists are particularly helpful when they are designed to meet the needs of specific students. Student participation in developing checklists helps them to learn what is valued in a particular learning context and to take ownership of their own learning. Such checklists can be developed to provide, for example,

- a list of language expectations for literacy development
- an overview of reading and viewing interests
- an overview of the processes and strategies students use at various stages in developing a piece of writing or a media product
- a list of specific revising strategies
- a list of specific editing strategies and skills
- information on levels of attainment
- a summary of writing folder information
- a summary of demonstrated skills in drama, visual arts and media production
- self- and peer-assessment tools

Checklists are also helpful for program evaluation and planning.

By providing visual records of students' learning experiences and achievements, checklists can help teacher to identify

- strengths and deficiencies in the instructional program
- areas to stress in coming weeks
- topics for discussion with other teachers or further professional exploration

Conferences and Interviews

Conferences and interviews with students are valuable sources of information on students' language processes, attitudes and work habits. Conferences and interviews also provide students with immediate and personal feedback and give teachers an opportunity to recommend new directions, shifts of emphasis, and particular activities, and materials and also to give reasons for those recommendations.

Conferences are an effective strategy for assessing, describing and commenting on

- reading processes and strategies
- journals and logs
- traits and trends in the student's writing and other products
- the roles the student takes in groups
- progress to date
- current work
- the student's goals for future work
- work and study habits
- the student's willingness to take risks

Teachers may find it helpful to use checklists, questions, guides and/or logs to focus and guide conferences, interviews and recordkeeping.

Miscue Analysis and Running Records

Miscue analysis and running records are particularly helpful with beginning readers or readers who are struggling with the reading process.

Running records are written records of the student's oral reading as observed and recorded by the teacher. Running records allow teachers to keep systematic notes about students' reading during normal classroom activities.

A miscue is any oral reading response that does not match the text. Miscue analysis and running records provide information about the strategies and cueing systems students use when they read. Observing students' miscue patterns enables teachers to

- ascertain the degree to which they seek meaning
- ascertain the extent to which students use pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues
- discover if students rely too heavily on one cueing system for reading
- observe how students' miscue performance varies as a function of texts or of students' background experiences
- identify students' reading strengths
- identify students' concepts about reading and reading strategies
- plan and adapt instruction to the needs of individual students

Observation

Observing students as language learners and users in the classroom and other learning environments provides multiple opportunities for informal assessment. Planning should allow for recordkeeping on observations of each student in various learning situations throughout the year. Observation is a powerful source of information.

- It is grounded in authentic, contextualized experiences.
- It captures descriptive, longitudinal data to use for comparison over time.
- It can assess developmental characteristics.

Systematic, ongoing observation provides information about students'

- thinking processes
- oral work
- work habits
- persistence
- participation in drama
- feelings about themselves as language learners and users
- attitudes toward English language arts

- specific areas of strength and weakness
- preferred learning styles
- social development (e.g., ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively)
- development and understanding of language processes

A variety of record-keeping systems may be used for organizing observations, including anecdotal records and checklists. Careful recordkeeping is important both for responding to the needs and development of individual students and for communicating with parents. Teachers may find it helpful to supplement observations with audio- and videotapes and to use those tapes for sharing information about a student's learning with parents.

Performance Assessment

Performance assessment allows teachers to observe directly students' application of what they know and are able to do. Performance assessment in English language arts focusses on the process as well as the product. It involves

- presenting students with a task
- observing what students do and say, watching for selected/particular characteristics, making anecdotal records
- interviewing students during or after the task
- developing and applying criteria to assess student performance (using scoring tools such as rubrics, rating scales, task-specific guides, checklists)
- developing criteria for product assessment to provide students with a clear focus on elements of quality to guide their work
- examining what they produce and applying criteria to assess what they actually know and can do
- identifying future instructional and learning needs

*A **rubric** identifies and describes the criteria used to assess student performance.*

Observations of a student's classroom performance and completion of tasks, together with student-teacher reflection on the learning involved, can provide specific information for assessment of progress which can be used by teachers to design instruction and by students to improve, reinforce and extend their learning.

Performance assessment gives information about a student's ability to

- use concepts, skills and language processes
- raise questions
- reason logically
- think flexibly and creatively, changing strategies when a particular approach does not work
- actively accomplish complex and significant tasks
- use prior knowledge; recent learning; and relevant skills, strategies and processes
- work with partners or small groups
- persist, concentrate and work independently

Questioning

Effective questioning allows teachers to identify what the student knows and what the student needs to learn. Effective high-level, open-ended questions challenge students to use cognitively complex skills—to think.

The sorts of questions teachers ask send powerful messages about what they really value. Questions and tasks which demand higher-level thinking demonstrate to students that teachers value this type of thinking. Questions and tasks which require students to apply their skill and knowledge to new situations develop higher-order thinking.

Open-ended questions require students to respond to questions for which a variety of successful responses are possible. Open-ended questions give information about a student's ability to

- organize and interpret information
- make generalizations
- clarify and express their own thinking
- understand concepts
- demonstrate originality/creativity

Questionnaires, Inventories, and Surveys

Well-designed questionnaires, inventories and surveys reveal students' feelings and attitudes toward different aspects of English language arts. Information gathered through well-designed surveys can, for example, help teachers to

- tap students' habits, interests and attitudes
- build on students' strengths and expand their interests
- elicit students' perceptions about their learning

Rating Scales and Analytic Scales

Rating scales indicate a measure of accomplishment and enable teachers and students to assess a wide range of learning experiences by noting the frequency or quality of a particular behaviour. Once the criteria for evaluation have been determined, qualitative judgments can be made about identified aspects of the learning.

Rating scales can be developed, for example, to assess

- specific products, such as a piece of writing, a role-playing activity or a media project
- specific learning outcomes
- participation in and contribution to small-group learning
- writing skills
- reading strategies
- responses to literature and visual texts

It is helpful for students to contribute to the development of rating scales, particularly when the scales are used for self-assessment or peer feedback.

Analytic scales can be used to assess a variety of learning outcomes and products. Analytic scales may be used by teachers to establish and communicate the criteria used for assigning interim or final numerical or letter grades and by students to monitor their own learning.

Developing analytic scales involves

- determining the criteria by which the learning will be assessed
- weighting each criterion to reflect its importance (in terms of what is valued or what has been emphasized in the learning or performance task)
- identifying various levels of achievement or performance for each criterion

It is important that students understand what criteria and weighting will be used to evaluate their work and it is desirable that they collaborate with the teacher in the process of setting and weighting these criteria.

Self-Assessment

In the process of learning, students need various forms of feedback about their work from their teacher and their peers. However, students learn best when they have frequent opportunities to assess their own learning and performance.

Student self-assessment promotes the development of

- metacognitive ability (the ability to reflect critically on one's own reasoning)
- ownership of learning
- independence of thought

Enhancing students' abilities to assess their own progress is an important goal of assessment in English language arts. Students need frequent opportunities to reflect on what they know and can do and what they need to learn next. When students are engaged in applying criteria for self-assessment (and for peer-assessment), they begin to internalize elements of quality and performance standards that can lead to significant improvements in the quality of their work and learning.

Self-assessment strategies include the use of

- questionnaires, e.g., following a collaborative activity or project to determine how well the group functioned as a team and how well the individual student participated and contributed to the effectiveness of the process/product
- learning logs/journals
- periodic reflective writing or group discussion to identify ways in which students have demonstrated progress toward achievement of learning outcomes

- peer feedback: giving constructive comments on one another's work helps students develop their sense of standards for their own performance
- student-teacher interviews and conferences
- collaborative planning and goal-setting involving students in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, forming options for future learning experiences and making decisions about what they will do to meet their learning goals

Teachers can use student self-assessments to determine

- whether there is change and growth in the students' attitudes, understanding and achievement
- whether students' beliefs about their performance correspond to actual performance
- whether the students and the teacher have similar views of expectations and criteria for assessment

Student Folders and Portfolios

Collections and selections of student work represent rich sources of authentic information on

- what strategies the student uses
- the level of skill development
- the best work the student can produce
- the student's growth as a language learner and user

The process of keeping student folders and selecting from them to assemble portfolios for various purposes and audiences is a valuable educational activity.

The student folder is a collection of student work which might include pieces of writing (both early drafts and final versions), drawings, journal and log samples, media products and other productions or records that establish what the student has been doing. Pieces of writing, for example, should address a range of purposes and audiences and include a variety of formats, such as

- learning logs (e.g., what I did, what I learned, what questions I still have)
- responses to reading and viewing experiences
- a variety of ways to organize and record information (e.g. notes, charts, outlines, semantic maps, summaries)
- explanations of the steps/processes used in performing a language task
- responses to open-ended questions
- pieces crafted in writer's workshop

The portfolio is a selection of student work. Schools and teachers may do many different things with portfolios, depending on their purpose and the co-ordination of portfolios with other activities for learning, assessment and evaluation. Portfolios may, for example, be very selective and contain only one kind of work or only certain samples of work. Portfolios may contain items the student and perhaps also the teacher consider representative of the best the student can produce. The process of selection of a student's best efforts can in itself be a very valuable experience. This process should involve students in reflecting on their progress and achievement in reference to specific learning goals.

In responding to and assessing student writing and media products, teachers should consider appropriate comments and assessment criteria in terms of the nature and requirements of the task, its purpose and its intended audience.

Aspects of writing to assess/respond to might include

- clarity (of meaning)
- content (ideas, information)
- organization
- use of appropriate form and style (to suit a particular audience or a specific purpose)
- voice
- use of language structures for clear and correct writing (sentence and paragraph construction, spelling, punctuation)
- presentation

Tests

Testing is only one means of collecting assessment data—a test measures achievement at a specific point in time. Tests play a minor role in the total assessment program and should be used in appropriate balance with other assessment practices to ensure that students have frequent and varied opportunities to demonstrate their level of performance in relation to curriculum outcomes.

Tests should be designed to encourage thinking and problem solving rather than memorization and recall of factual information. Test items signal what the teacher considers to be important in the course content. Questions on tests should be framed so that they are relevant, clear and specific. As with other assessment procedures, teachers should refer to curriculum outcomes in developing test items. For example, selected-response formats (multiple choice, true-false, matching) have limitations in measuring learning outcomes in English language arts. Instead of assessing the application of skills, strategies and processes in meaningful situations, selected-response items tend to assess knowledge of factual information and the application of basic skills in isolated, decontextualized ways.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Administration of externally-prepared assessments is on a large scale in comparison to classroom assessments, and often involves hundreds, sometimes thousands of students, allowing for use of results at the provincial, district and/or school levels. Depending on the comprehensiveness of the assessment, information can be used for all of the same purposes as classroom-based assessment, but it can also serve additional administrative and accountability purposes such as for admissions, placement, student certification, educational diagnosis and program evaluation. External assessments offer common standards for assessment and for administration, scoring and reporting which allow for comparison of results over time.

As part of the regional agenda, development of external assessments in the core curriculum areas is being undertaken. Generally, external assessment includes assessments prepared by departments of education, national and international assessment groups, publishers and research groups. Each provincial department of education makes decisions on whether or not to administer external assessments.

PROGRAM AND SYSTEM EVALUATION

The results from both external and internal assessments of student achievement can be used to varying degrees for program and system evaluation. External assessment results, however, are more comparable across various groups and are therefore more commonly the basis for these types of evaluations.

In essence, the main difference between student evaluation and program and system evaluation is in how the results are used. In program evaluation marks or scores for individual students are not the primary focus of the assessment—it is the effectiveness of the program that is evaluated, and the results are used to show the extent to which the many outcomes of the program are achieved.

When results are used for system evaluation, the focus is on how the various levels and groups within the system, such as classrooms, schools, districts and so on, are achieving the intended outcomes. In many ways student and program evaluation are very much the same in that both emphasize obtaining student information concerning their conceptual understanding, their ability to use knowledge and reason to solve problems and their ability to communicate effectively.

Appendix X

Only As Special As Necessary

Only As Special As Necessary

Program planning teams may find consideration of the following questions helpful in making decisions regarding the level of intervention and the recommended services when designing and developing programming for students with special needs.

1. What is the student independently able to do and/or participate in with the class?

2. What is the student able to do and/or participate in with the assistance of the natural supports in the classroom?

3. What is the student able to do and/or participate in with the assistance of additional supports in the classroom?

4. Are there outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum that cannot be met by the student? If so, what individualized outcomes are required to address the student's needs?

5. What level of support is required to assist the student in achieving the individualized outcomes, keeping in mind that the support should be only as special as necessary (natural supports in classroom <.....> additional classroom supports)?

6. Are there services and/or programming that are best provided in a setting other than the student's classroom? If so, how can they be scheduled so as to be least disruptive to the student's inclusion in his/her class?

Appendix XI

IPP Implementation Matrix

IPP MATRIX

A matrix can be a useful tool to the program planning team. The student's individualized *outcomes are listed down the side of the matrix. Activities, subjects,* and routines are listed across the top of the matrix. The team then records where the outcomes will be taught, practised and reinforced.

The use of a matrix helps to show the team:

- how the student's program can be integrated across the curriculum and the activities that constitute the school day
- which parts of the day may require more focus
- which outcomes will require development of additional activities, materials, etc.

SUBJECTS ACTIVITIES ROUTINES													
OUTCOMES													

Appendix XII

Assistive Technology Information

With permission, Halifax Regional School Board

Halifax Regional School Board

STUDENT SERVICES - Assistive Technology
1326 Bedford Highway, Bedford, Nova Scotia B4A 1C9
Phone (902) 832-4384 Fax (902) 832-4390

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

***Assistive technology (AT)* is the term used to describe a range of devices, strategies and services that can be utilized to improve, increase or maintain a person's ability to perform tasks. Assistive technology has the potential to increase a student's control over objects, daily activities, age-appropriate experiences and subsequent learning. Use of assistive technology is not an activity in itself, but rather a means toward achieving goals. Considerable ongoing collaboration among the student, the family and professionals is required to establish goals that will enable maximum participation and independence across many settings.**

Categories of Assistive Technology

Aids for Daily Living (ADL): Modified items or specialized devices for self help in activities such as eating, bathing, cooking, dressing, toileting, home maintenance

Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC): Electronic and non-electronic techniques and strategies for oral and/or written communication for persons with permanent or temporary disabilities

Computer Access: Modified standard or alternate equipment, which enables a person to use a computer (accessibility options, pointer, custom keyboard, switch, on-screen scanner, Braille, voice input/output)

Educational/Vocational/Cognitive: Specialized software, hardware, devices, instructional manipulatives and strategies for reading, spelling, writing, math, organization, behaviour, work tasks, memory assistance

Environmental Control Systems: Devices or systems that enable someone with limited mobility to control appliances, electronic aids and security systems in various surroundings

Home/School/Worksite Modifications: Structural adaptations or fabrications that remove or reduce physical barriers (ramps, lifts, custom desk or workspace, bathroom changes)

Seating and Positioning: Accommodations to a wheelchair or other seating system to provide greater body stability, trunk/head support, upright posture and reduction of pressure on the skin

Aids for Vision: Magnifiers, Braille or speech output devices, large print screens, closed circuit television for magnifying documents, etc.

Aids for Hearing: Assistive listening devices (FM systems), hearing aids, telecommunication devices for the deaf, visual and tactile alerting systems, etc.

Prosthetics and Orthotics: Replacement, substitution or augmentation of missing or malfunctioning body parts (artificial limbs, splints, braces, etc.)

Mobility Aids: Manual and electric wheelchairs, mobile bases for custom chairs, walkers, three-wheel scooters and other utility vehicles for increasing personal mobility

Vehicle Modifications: Adaptive driving aids, hand controls, wheelchair and other lifts, modified vans or other motor vehicles used for personal transportation

Service Animals: Animals assisting individuals with hearing, vision, or physical disabilities

WHAT SUPPORT CAN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES PROVIDE?

1. Professional development
2. Collaborative assessment of assistive technology needs within the school setting to enhance implementation of the student's learning objectives
3. Loan items

Student Services maintains a lending library including items such as reference materials, word processors, specialized software, adapted devices, switches, alternate keyboards, alternate mouse movers, touch windows, computers, assistive listening devices, communication boards and voice output communication aids. These are intended for preview and evaluation by staff and students in consideration of school and/or parent purchases. Loan periods will vary depending upon availability, complexity of items and student needs.

REFERRAL PROCEDURE

Referrals should be made using the **Assistive Technology Consultation and Loan Request** form, by a member of the school team following consideration of AT needs during the program planning process.

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